William E. Simon Jr. at West Point: Does Character Still Count?

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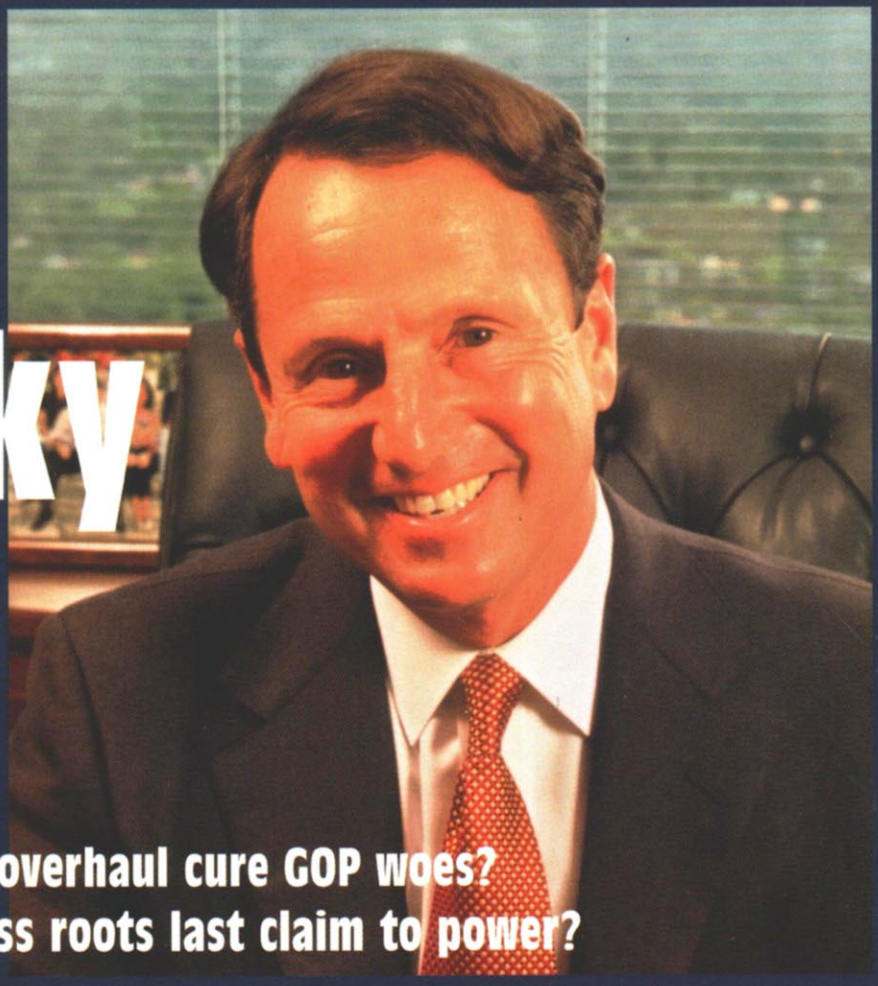
John Campbell's Baptism of Fire

Mark S. Pulliam Goes Beyond Law & Order

The Parsky Plan



Will a state Party overhaul cure GOP woes? Or merely end grass roots last claim to power?

by John Kurzweil

Reagan Country . . . alive and well

Report on the second annual Western Conservative Conference

by William E. Saracino

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Honorary Conference Chairman, Senator Ray Haynes (left), keynote speaker, Congressman Tom Tancredo (center), and Conference Chairman Richard A. Delgaudio, at the June, 2001 conference. (photo by Mike Robbins)

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CORRESPONDENCE

Hogwash in Fresno

Mr. Baldwin's article on Cesar Chavez ("Farmyeard Fraud," *CPR*, Jan./Feb. 2001) seemed a bit after the fact, but then, lo, in April the UFW again reared its desperate head and Fresno's own Mayor Alan Autry of "Heat of the Night" fame remarked that it was high time Fresno honored this "hero for all of the people" by naming a street after him, which, as Mr. Baldwin makes clear, is hogwash.

W. Edward Chynoweth
Sanger

Minimum Wage Hike = Lost Jobs

Regarding James Bemis's column on the minimum wage ("Santa Monica Socialists Strike Again," *CPR Online*, June 21, 2001, http://www.cppf.org/CPR/Columns/2001/6June/SantaMonicasLivingWageB621.html), before California increases the minimum wage, our $100,000 per year legislators should understand who actually makes what, where the money comes from, and what form it comes in.

California's minimum wage laws ignore the fact that "tips" are a form of compensation from an individual's employment association. Consumers do not "tip" random people on the street, they "tip" employees (waiters, bar tenders, etc.) who perform services because of their employment association. For these tiped employees, whose base wage normally is the minimum, a 50¢ per hour minimum wage increase is often an insignificant increase in their compensation because their gratuities can range from $5 to $20 per hour. But it is not insignificant for employers who must pass along significant cost increases to customers in some fashion. Wages are significant costs. In a sense, employers do not pay wages, they collect them from customers and distribute them to the people who provide the work. Mandated wage increases increase costs to consumers, which shrinks demand and reduces jobs. Adding 50¢ per hour to the wage of a "tipped" employee who makes $20 per hour with benefits actually cost him or her their job — because there are fewer customers. Also, deserving behind-the-scenes people — cooks, bus-boys, cashiers, dispatchers — whose base wage is $8 to $12 per hour with benefits, are *not* given raises and may even lose their jobs because of the 50¢ raise on the base "minimum wage" of tipped employees.

In my organization — Cloud 9 Shuttle, an award-winning San Diego ground transportation service company — a minimum wage increase means 10 to 15 people lose their jobs. Our drivers, whose base compensation is minimum wage, theoretically get a raise, though their actual compensation is almost 100 percent more than the minimum when tips are considered. Our non-gratuity employees, earning $8 to $15 per hour plus benefits, get no raise. A minimum wage increase raises our prices, demand falls because people can drive themselves more cheaply, and pollution and traffic increase. Some drivers, mechanics, reservations agents, dispatchers, cashiers, etc., all making more than the minimum wage, lose their jobs.

California is pricing itself out of the game. Workers comp, taxes, and Social Security costs also rise with wage increases. Redistributing income does not work. Employers will either move or change businesses. My company is moving from organized "car-pooling" to and from the airport, which used to serve society and our share holders well, towards buses, due to the labor problems created by state government. Traffic increases while our legislators, who have no clue how hard it is to make a real living, make rules creating real problems for the very people they are trying to help.

John Hawkins
president, Cloud 9 Shuttle, San Diego

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THE FRONT LINE

Grass Roots Collapse?

Republican recovery in California requires coming to terms with a few straightforward, important facts: Conservatives win elections, and they win them with grass roots activism. Party rules changes might help "professionalize" its operations, but professional operatives don't win elections: people do.

Good candidates with local support win elections. But the GOP grass roots operation in California is dying. Big money from business interests help, but left to their own devices (and more often than not, their desire to accommodate rather than confront the left), these well-heeled special interests lose close elections. Grass roots conservatives in San Jose and San Diego can tell you why Jim Cuneen, Brian Bilbray, Sue Jackson, and other moderates lost their elections.

Not that conservatives should brag. Over the last 10 years, they've allowed local grass roots organizations to atrophy nearly into nonexistence. Christian Coalition, the California Republican Assembly, anti-tax and pro-life organizations, and many local gun rights groups are shadows of their former selves. Racked by internal strife and lack of money, many cannot field the volunteer armies that were their hallmarks in the '70s and '80s.

Eliminating CRP's conservative volunteers was a specific goal of some Wilson activists — George Gorton, for one — in the early 1990s. The plan, detailed by a Wilson operative in a now-infamous 1991 memo, was to "change the Party's direction," starting by eliminating conservatives from positions of power in the Party and consolidating Wilsonite control of the Party apparatus. More liberal legislators would be elected and Party philosophy would shift radically, dropping Reaganite themes, especially on social issues (Wilson had campaigned against Reagan in New Hampshire in 1976, calling him California's "worst governor"), and embracing a "new Republicanism": "moderate" on social issues, "conservative" on fiscal matters. In practice, this meant willing to compromise on *any* issue, anytime Wilson found it personally expedient.

This grandiose vision was largely thwarted by the 1992 arrival of the Allied Business PAC, which elected conservative legislators in most of that year's GOP primaries, sending most of them to Sacramento in the general.

But given the present atrophy in California's conservative movement, it appears Gorton may have achieved part of what the memo set out. Whether by design or not, the conservative grass roots withered during Wilson's governorship. The combination of a shrinking volunteer base with Rob Hurtt's disappearance from the money side after 1998 and a timid California Independent Business PAC (in short, no real conservative money) has left California conservatives today with a lot of bark, but not a lot of bite. They have retained their hold on the Party's reigns only because their moderate opponents, for the most part, have proven incompetent.

How to change this bleak outlook? GOP Senate and Assembly leaders Jim Brulte and Dave Cox (with some help from Senator Ray Haynes) have begun monthly meetings with conservative grass roots leaders intended to let the grass roots know what legislators are doing, to find out how the legislators can help the leaders energize their neighborhood volunteers, to activate them, and to form a new base of conservative energy in California. After two meetings, everyone is excited about the group's possibilities.

Reviving the California Republican Party will require money, activists, and a lot of hard work. It is easier to argue over rule changes that won't elect a single officeholder than it is actually to rebuild the CRP. CPR

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Beyond Law and Order

Conservatives are beginning to re-think the garrison state.

MARK S. PULLIAM

OVER THE past 30 years, the conservative position on crime and law enforcement has shifted considerably. When Richard Nixon framed his "Southern Strategy" in 1968, there were just two attitudes about criminals: one was either in favor of "law and order" or one was "soft on crime." Tapping the public's disgust with the pro-defendant excesses of the Warren Court and uneasiness about urban and student unrest, and contrasting himself with the "it's society's fault" approach to crime of liberals such as LBJ's Attorney General Ramsey Clark and New York Mayor John Lindsay, Nixon rode the law and order position to the White House. "Law and order" has been a hallmark of the Republican platform ever since.

Conservatives cheered when President Bush declared war on drugs and appointed Bill Bennett "drug czar." They applauded when tough-talking federal prosecutor Rudy Giuliani became a celebrity by fighting a purported "crime wave" on Wall Street, staging heavily publicized arrests of stock traders at their high-rise offices, in some cases having them escorted from work in handcuffs before banks of TV cameras. Conservatives enthusiastically supported increased spending for law enforcement at the state and federal levels, including quasi-military equipment for SWAT personnel, automatic weapons to combat street gangs and drug lords, electronic gear to monitor organized crime, and so forth. Conservatives supported the use of undercover and "sting" operations, sometimes bordering on entrapment, because they felt that only latent criminals would be ensnared by such tactics. And conservatives have typically favored stricter criminal laws to punish anti-social behavior, that make it easier to catch and convict the common criminal, and that remove discretion from judges.

As Richard Weaver famously observed, ideas have consequences, and the conventional Republican thinking about crime and law enforcement over the past several decades has produced results, some intended and some not. The U.S. prison population has never been higher, in both absolute numbers and on a per capita basis. Perhaps accordingly, crime rates, although still high by historical standards, have been declining. Like any complex activity conducted by the state — and conservatives must keep in mind that law enforcement is currently (although, as we shall see, not necessarily exclusively) a government function — mistakes are inevitable and excessive power will be abused. Some of the errors resulted from well-intentioned policies. In their zeal to eliminate sentencing disparities and remove the discretion of lenient judges, for instance, reformers enacted "mandatory minimums" and rigid "sentencing guidelines" that can produce absurd and unjust results. Either approach will lead to bad results sometimes, which we should try our best to minimize, but we must also recognize that imperfections cannot be eliminated absolutely from any system run by imperfect human beings.

EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY is imperfect, defense lawyers can be inept, and despite the formidable burden of proof and procedural protections for the accused in criminal cases, occasionally innocent people are convicted in error and punished for crimes they did not commit. Humans unavoidably make mistakes. The only way to prevent this, however, is to stop enforcing the law — *i.e.,* to surrender to the barbarians.

Not all errors can be shrugged off so easily. Alas, government power tends to be used as a weapon, for

Mark S. Pulliam, California Political Review's *legal issues correspondent, is an attorney in private practice in San Diego.*

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political, if not always explicitly partisan, ends. With too many resources at their disposal and too little accountability — and with the same dearth of scruples that plagues civil attorneys — prosecutors can become inquisitors, as Ollie North, Casper Weinberger, Elliott Abrams, and a host of other victims of "Independent Counsel" Lawrence Walsh can attest. With too much concern for convictions and too little for due process, agencies such as the FBI, DEA, and BATF can oppress rather than protect our liberties. Just ask Pat Nolan, Randy Weaver, or Elian Gonzalez. A state omnipotent enough to persecute our wealthiest and most powerful citizens — Michael Milken and Bill Gates, for example — can easily overwhelm the ordinary among us, as the victims still serving sentences due to the "mass child abuse" hysteria of a few years ago can attest (including case of the Amiraults chronicled by the *Wall Street Journal).*

Nor, in this unsettling age of Political Correctness, does the prospect of "strict laws against anti-social conduct" provide the comfort that it did 30 years ago. Now, it means asset forfeiture in the absence of criminal intent or even wrongdoing, "hate crime" legislation designed to punish unfashionable or unpopular ideas, and sending businessmen to jail for arcane regulatory oversights — sometimes for violation of *retroactive* laws. (To Bill "Marquis de Sade" Lockyer, law enforcement means subjecting corporate CEOs to homosexual rape.)

At the same time, conviction rates and Death Row demographics are being scrutinized by so-called civil rights groups for rigid adherence to racial quotas. Sound police practices are denounced as "racial profiling." Sadly, we have seen too often the evolution of the exclusionary rule philosophy — "the constable blunders, so the criminal goes free" — into something even worse: the criminal goes free and gets rich (*e.g.,* Rodney King) while the constable goes to jail in violation of

WHAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUN CONTROL

By SAM PAREDES

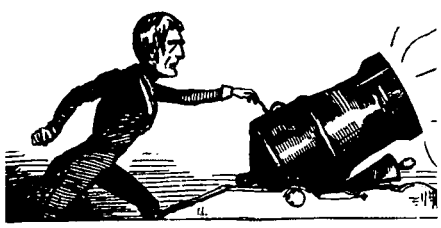
There's a new sheriff in town and the anti-freedom gun grabbers hate it. Sheriff Dubya (*aka* President George W. Bush) rode into town like an old west Texas Ranger and wasted no time setting about correcting injustices. No one says he's been perfect — but, man o' man, what a breath of fresh air.

What exactly has he done, you ask? He has systematically reversed some of the Clinton Administration's worst anti-gun policies and is hard at work dismantling some of the more ridiculous Clinton programs still in place.

To start with, the Bush Justice Department under Attorney General John Ashcroft has strongly asserted the interpretation that the Second Amendment "unequivocally" protects the rights of individuals as opposed to the theory that gun ownership is a "collective right" of the states, exercisable only through and by state and federal militias. He also slashed the length of time the FBI can keep records on instant background checks for gun buyers from 180 days to 24 hours.

Bush also blocked a UN proposal that called for restrictions on the sale of small arms because it threatened our constitutional rights and compromised our national sovereignty.

He ended a gun buyback program created by former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo, under whom HUD had become something of an anti-gun juggernaut. It was a poster boy of the anti-gun left despite being as ineffective as it was expensive.



The president has also retreated from the disastrous agreement the Clinton Administration made with Smith & Wesson under which gun owners' rights would be compromised in return for special treatment for the gun maker from the federal government. The intensely negative reaction of Smith & Wesson's clientele to the pact — sales fell through the floor — ultimately forced the company's sale for a sum far less than its pre-pact value.

Gun-related crime is down and accidents are at an all time low. Sheriff Bush deserves our continued encouragement, and maybe — just maybe — he'll run the rest of the villainous anti-freedom vermin out of town .... CPR

Sam Paredes is executive director of Gun Owners of California.

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the constitutional ban on double jeopardy (*e.g.,* LAPD Sgt. Stacey Koon). And O.J. Simpson continues to hunt for his ex-wife's killer on the golf courses of South Florida, thanks to the work of Johnnie Cochran and Gerald Uelmen.

Is it any wonder, then, that conservatives have begun to question their traditional approach to crime? William F. Buckley and Milton Friedman advocate the legalization of drugs. Paul Craig Roberts has called for the abolition of plea bargaining on the ground that unscrupulous prosecutors coerce guilty pleas through "overcharging" and bogus evidence, which includes police perjury and, in Roberts' estimation, most informant testimony. Roberts is so disenamored of the criminal justice system, which he charges is rife with corruption, that he contends no one should "presume a connection between conviction and guilt." Citing DNA expert Barry Scheck (one of O.J.'s celebrated "Dream Teamers"), Roberts charges that crime lab evidence is fraught with junk science and outright fraud.

Before dismissing this ACLU-style rhetoric as cranky ranting perhaps driven by Waco and Ruby Ridge, one ought to read Roberts' latest book, *The Tyranny of Good Intentions: How Prosecutors and Bureaucrats are Trampling the Constitution in the Name of Justice.* The subtitle makes his point. Picking up a theme he began in his prescient 1992 Frank M. Engle Lecture, Roberts traces the erosion of centuries-old liberties we inherited from our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, dating to *Magna Carta.* Roberts (with co-author Lawrence Stratton) methodically surveys the various abuses of the modern criminal justice system in compelling detail and with a sobering historical context. This is where Roberts is at his best, and the book is worth reading for this material alone. His policy prescriptions, such as abolishing plea bargaining, are another matter. If overzealous prosecutors are a threat to liberty, as Roberts argues, then it hardly solves the problem to increase their number 10- or 20-fold, which is what we would have to do if the 90 to 95 percent of criminal cases now disposed of by plea bargains had to be tried instead (to the same dysfunctional class of jurors who acquitted O.J. Simpson). Society has to deal with law-breakers and predators, sometimes harshly. Getting sentimental about criminals isn't the solution. (In his 1996 bestseller, *Guilty,* Judge Harold Rothwax convincingly portrays a criminal justice system in which defense attorneys routinely manipulate the process to defeat the truth and protect the guilty — in other words, a system in which the flagrant abuses of the O.J. Simpson case are the rule rather than the exception.)

What, then? Economist Bruce L. Benson takes a different tack in his new book, *To Serve and Protect,* from The Independent Institute, arguing in favor of a de-centralization and privatization of law enforcement rather than disempowerment. Without questioning that there are malefactors from whom the rest of society needs protection, Benson challenges whether crime control needs to be (at least exclusively) a government function. He points out that for many centuries the maintenance of public safety was entirely private and community-based. Benson, a pioneer in this area, explores several alternatives to the *status quo:* citizen policing, gated communities, private security, cooperation with business groups, victim restitution, private arbitration, contract courts, victim-offender mediation, self-defense, and privatized prisons. Some of these concepts (especially community patrols) have antecedents in American history, or (like restitution and mediation) are commonly used in other countries. Of course, not all private sector alternatives are, for that reason alone, preferable to the existing criminal justice system. Vigilantism, leased convict labor, and contract bounty hunters are not viable forms of "private justice." And contracting out the construction or operation of a government sanctioned prison is not meaningful "privatization," any more than contracting out the IRS would be.

Punishing criminals ultimately entails coercion, a function the government is peculiarly suited to perform. Collective self-defense is one of the basic provisions of the "social contract," pursuant to which autonomous moral actors leave the "state of nature" and form a civil society (the state). That is not to say we should not explore alternatives to incarceration whenever possible — such as for non-violent or first-time offenders, or for "crimes" that violate laws not essential to the maintenance of public safety or civic order.

Will we ever be able to dispense with a (primarily) state-run criminal justice system? Only in the idealized world of wishful thinking and intellectual abstraction. The reality is, the world is a dangerous place, full of gangs, thugs, predators, urban chaos, and cultural anarchy. Still, "To Serve and Protect" reminds us that more laws, police, prosecutors, and prisons is not the only way to fight crime. Private sector self-help can and should play a role (which is

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another reason to preserve Second Amendment rights).

On the other hand, Andrew Peyton Thomas, in his wide-ranging 1994 book *Crime and the Sacking of America*, makes the best point of all: the most effective law enforcement tool is a virtuous public. The onslaught of criminality in the 1960s — which prompted Nixon's "law and order" strategy — coincided with the rise of moral relativism and the breakdown of our shared values. Until we restore our basic institutions — marriage, intact two-parent families, community cohesion, individual responsibility, religious faith — and the Judaeo-Christian cultural influences essential to foster and preserve those institutions, society will continue to deteriorate into a Hobbesian "state of nature" requiring a massive (and therefore potentially oppressive and even tyrannical) law enforcement apparatus. The only way to avoid this endless and unwinnable "arms race" is to remedy the underlying malady: the left's largely successful assault on traditional values.

So what should conservatives think about law and order? Janet Reno taught us a few lessons about crime control — lessons we don't want to repeat. We need "law and order," but as Paul Craig Roberts points out, we have to be careful that we don't destroy our cherished liberties in the process. We should strenuously resist the proliferation of new criminal laws, especially at the federal level, and consider with an open mind all workable alternatives to costly and sometimes ruinous incarceration. Putting more people in jail is not the only solution. Finally, we must resist the nihilist tide and turn our culture around, lest we end up in a world where life is, in Thomas Hobbes's gloomy words, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." As Andrew Peyton Thomas states in *Crime and the Sacking of America:*

> A nation practicing self-government cannot employ enough policemen to ensure order if a majority of its citizens no longer view the rule of law — or, more to the point, anything — as a moral absolute.

This is our challenge. The moral of the Clinton era, which we ignore at our peril, is that a society that depends solely on force to restrain evil is doomed to both force and evil. CPR

THE MIDNIGHT ECONOMIST

Undermining The Market

Creating Surpluses And Shortages

WILLIAM R. ALLEN

SOME SUBVERSIVE has suggested that economics is common sense made unnecessarily complex by economists. At least the last part of that statement is a vile canard. Still, it seems impossible to make some elements of elemental Truth sufficiently simple to be comprehended by most editorial writers, politicians, and other poets. And even when they do understand, sort of, they can find it ideologically inconvenient to acknowledge sensible implications of Truth for public policy.

Consider price controls. In an "open" market, with consumers, managers, and investors free to bid to buy and offer for sale, the market will generate prices that will "clear" the market. That is, as if guided by an invisible hand, reasonably rational people will act in such manner, in their own interests, that prices are determined where quantities demanded will equal quantities offered. Generating such equilibrium prices certainly will not eradicate all problems — we still will

William R. Allen, in the majesty of the UCLA Department of Economics, is almost always in equilibrium.

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live in a world of scarcity. But buyers can buy all they want, and sellers can sell all they want, at the market-clearing price.

But Big Brother and Little Brother may decide somehow that that price is sociologically either too high or too low. So they override the market — consisting of all the other members of the community — and stipulate a price other than the market-clearing price. Jungle instinct should tell us right away that we are here on a slippery slope. Subverting the market will result in a *disequilibrium* price. If the price is set too high, suppliers will want to sell more than buyers will buy, and we will have a "surplus"; at a stipulated price too low, buyers will want to buy more than sellers will sell, and we will have a "shortage."

Even in the absurd worlds of politics and journalism, why would government types want to establish prices that inevitably will *unbalance* the market and cause waste, confusion, miscalculation, and frustration? It might be a commie plot.

When would such silliness lead to imposing a price floor above the market-clearing level?

Try agriculture. Through nearly all of the twentieth century and reaching fruition in the New Deal, there have been those who "want to do something for the farmer." Many schemes have been activated to make farm prices higher than those the market would generate. Big Brother may increase demand for farm goods through adding government demand to private sector demand; or he may reduce supply by some "soil conservation" ploy, paying farmers in a world of hunger to reduce output. If government buys excess supply, it can store it in leaky ships until it rots or ruin foreign farmers by dumping it in Lower Slobbovia. Meanwhile, American consumers pay higher prices and greater total expenditure for smaller amounts of consumption, and American farmers receive an enormous proportion of their income from non-production or misdirected production.

How about wages? Everyone is entitled, it is presumed, to a governmentally-stipulated "living wage." Entirely aside from considerations of worker productivity, every one is to receive $10 or $16 or $25 an hour. Why be a piker? How about $100 or $1,000 or $10,000? But even legislators seem to feel that beyond some undefined level, a higher wage becomes increasingly ridiculous. But why, in what sense, does it become obviously absurd? It is sufficient to note that what is income to the recipient of the wage is cost to the payer of the wage. And an employer will not survive, much less prosper, if he must forever pay more for labor (or other input) than it is worth. If that fact of life is too grubby for sensitive redistributors of income, we can suggest that there would seem to be a degree of philosophic and ethical appropriateness in paying suppliers of productive inputs on the basis of their contributions to the social output. Those who contribute little receive little.

Subverters of the market have long exhibited versatility: They can cause havoc by artificially establishing prices too low as well as too high, encouraging greater consumption than can be rationally or practically supplied.

Rents are too high? Well, Little Brother can make it illegal to charge as much as the open-market price. Of course, we thereby create an apartment "shortage." Those renters who already have an apartment are happy for now, but many who would be willing to pay the ceiling price (or even the market-clearing price) cannot find a place to live. And in the longer run, existing apartment houses are poorly maintained, new investment in apartment building is curtailed, and mobility of apartment-dwellers is discouraged.

Gasoline prices are too high? The price-controllers can take care of you. But the quantity of gas demanded is increased and the quantity supplied is decreased by the lower price. As with controlled apartments, there is a shortage, and we have to live with this contrived shortage in various ways that are crude and costly.

The old military draft was largely a procedure by means of which salaries in the armed forces could be kept low, far less than the market value of the personnel in the alternative occupations. The draft enabled the community to shang-hai people to fill the gap between quantity of personnel demanded and quantity voluntarily supplied.

For more than a quarter of a century after World War II, foreign exchange rates (the price of a currency in terms of other currencies) were pegged by international price-controllers. The pound-price of the dollar was set too low. The number of dollars demanded by the British was greater than the number of dollars supplied to them through normal commercial channels — the infamous "dollar shortage," which, second only to the question of whether The Bomb would be dropped, was the leading foreign policy issue of the period.

Sometimes, more than one price is involved in a situation. Our government leaders can peg consumer retail prices of electricity at low levels while permit-

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ting wholesale prices paid by the middlemen utilities to fluctuate without limit. That Rube Goldberg arrangement can be called "deregulation." And when the roof quite inevitably caves in, the cause is widely deemed to be, not ineptitude of our rulers, but deregulation itself.

There is more to be said in each of these illustrations, matters of institutions, legalisms, precedents, political pressures, market and governmental processes. But basically these disequilibria are price phenomena: Pull the decreed price plug, permit free men to operate in free markets, and the market will be cleared — no shortages, no surpluses.

Ah, but there would also be fewer price and allocation martinets and busywork in the government bureaucracy and fewer discriminatory presents handed to the favored who are gathered around the public trough. On balance, the general community is greatly hurt by inefficiency and waste, but some vultures always seem to gain from any calamity. CPR

THE WORKING PRESS

The Heart of the Government Beast

By forcing through a small but symbolic sales tax increase, Davis and the Democrats gave the GOP an opening to raise the year's most fundamental issue.

TIM W. FERGUSON

By mid-summer the capital press corps' attention had shifted from energy shortages to influence peddling in Sacramento and to the related engorging of Gray Davis's campaign coffers. The big papers highlighted the governor's big donors, the implied (and occasionally stated) point being that uncontrolled contributions are the heart of the problem. It is more difficult to make the case that power and its sometimes subtle use is what draws such graft. It is easier (and more politically convenient) for reformist reporters just to decry and treat the symptom.

Which brings us to the power of the purse, the heart of the government beast. While the campaign taunts of 2002 are likely to be about fatcats and favors, and electricity and ineptitude, the most fundamental case against Davis and the Democrats will be that they spent like fools for four years and got so little from it. Ultimately, as the surpluses dried up, they had to hand the GOP an opening for raising this issue by forcing through a small but symbolic increase in the sales tax. Of course, in the reporting of budgetary byplay, it was the Republicans who were depicted as obstinately defending a tax cut in the face of public needs.

Never mind. The inside-baseball accounts of budget writing, however thorough and therefore useful, leave no lasting impression. If the GOP can find a well-financed, top-of-the-ticket voice to amplify the effective op-ed arguments of Tom McClintock and Ray Haynes (who appear in various outlets, most helpfully the *Orange County Register),* then a popular note might strike home. A timely assist might come from Davis-baiting state controller Kathleen Connell. The budgetary choices can be drawn in bright colors and clear lines. Somebody wasted $10 billion, and now it must come from the taxpayers' pockets or be drained from schools, highways, parks etc. But there is always risk in pushing that line — the GOP's eminences must themselves not be on the gravy train, or those very able if superficial journalists will seize on every hypocrisy and the drumbeat of coverage will drown out the message.

How many Republican officials can boast of a pork-free diet?

On a related if unpromising note, the "Tribune" re-

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gime at the *Los Angeles Times* rolled out one of its first big reporting projects, contrasting "Private Prosperities, Public Breakdowns." The template for the stories served the Democrat line that tax "cuts" further bleed the common infrastructure to the benefit of those who have plenty and are hoarding the good life.

Statistics can be found to support most reasonable points, and yes, it can be shown that fewer public facilities were built or maintained *vis-à-vis* the growth in income during the recent boom than in past periods of prosperity. How about then asking, however, whether this might be true for some reason other than greed and neglect? Might this be an especially apt question when — based on other statistics — the tax burden is at its peacetime high?

Such an investigation might show several factors: As the *Times* did note, the NIMBY resistance to major projects has blocked or bogged down many of the sort of public works identified with a "golden era." It is unfathomable that a State Water Project or Interstate Highway System could be undertaken in these times. Airport expansion, transportation routing, even school construction is often fought vociferously.

Then there is the comparative cost of building in the public sector vs. the private. Labor costs in the first are kept artificially high, the approval processes are especially laborious (and litigation-prone), and — despite Proposition 209 — diversity and other PC requirements gum up many contracts. When the higher government costs of operating a facility are plugged in, the incentive to avoid public projects grows. Nonetheless, more money than ever is spent by government. It simply buys much less than it used to.

♣ ♣ ♣

Both free-weekly "alternatives" to the *Times* in Los Angeles have run pieces flagging an apparent buckling to the demands of the city's big teacher union by new schools superintendent Roy Romer, the former Colorado governor and national Democrat party chairman. Should this be shocking? In those earlier positions he must have grown accustomed to school unions calling the shots. And who can say boo? In a move that drew nationwide press, the teachers spearheaded a drive (aided by the social left) that recalled three school board members in the heart of Orange County.

♣ ♣ ♣

Holdover *Times* local columnist Patt Morrison has been detailed to a weekly political dots-and-dashes column, something the paper sadly lacked, but it's hardly the sort of stuff San Francisco reads from diggers Matier & Ross. Instead, it's mostly cutesy items in keeping with past columnist practice at the paper. Morrison keeps another weekly space where she can play her own tune. One recent effort boldly ridiculed Rep. Duke Cunningham's constitutional amendment against flag burning. Wow — never would have expected such a stance in the *LA Times!*

Another Morrison column belittled the federal tax rebate. It *is* remarkable, given their incomes, how uniformly journalists detest any and all tax relief!

♣ ♣ ♣

Steve Kelley, bounced as the *San Diego Union-Tribune* cartoonist over what appeared to be internal issues, told the *American Journalism Review* that his ouster had political overtones. He said the staff of the editorial page — which has been neutered under the current regime — is so divided "it's like the Middle East." This shouldn't come as a surprise to those who've watched the paper's political drift. Copley Press, the owner, is now in the hands of longtime matriarch Helen Copley's even-less-anchored son, David.

♣ ♣ ♣

Meanwhile, the *New York Times* noted the censorious reaction of left-wing homosexual activists to avowed libertarian-lesbian Norah Vincent's emergence as a prominent pundit. The new *LA Times* honchos have been running her regularly on the op-ed page. Anyone give odds on the *San Francisco Chronicle* picking her up?

♣ ♣ ♣

The UC admissions timebomb continues to tick. The *Wall Street Journal* reported (on its front page) how foreign-language speakers are using advanced-placement tests (which include such skills) in lieu of the traditional SATs to hop over English-background applicants. Now a new affirmative-action program (using the term in the way even many conservatives endorse) for community-college transfers will boost these entries to the UC for under-represented groups. University officials say this won't displace otherwise eligible applicants, just add to the total enrollments. Expect more stories then on overcrowding (aka "public breakdowns"). CPR

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Baptism of Fire

A seven-month legislative novice learns what Democrats in office really care about.

by John Campbell

I AM A relative newcomer to the California Legislature and to life as an elected official. Even in the era of term limits, seven months in office does not a veteran make. But this has been a rather interesting seven months as the energy crisis and a faltering economy have served to abate the economic growth of recent years. I have been surprised at how pertinacious liberals have remained in the face of overwhelming evidence of the failure of many of their guiding tenets.

William Gladstone was one of Britain's great 19th century Liberal Party prime ministers. It is reported that he often said in private that he wished for prosperity only to make people more lucrative targets of taxation. Based on my observations, this sort of thinking is considerably more pervasive today than it was then. I have witnessed the following machinations and evidences of liberal thought in Sacramento:

SPENDING MONEY IS A LIBERAL'S RAISON D'ETRE

Why does someone become a state Legislator in the first place? If you are a Republican, it is probably because you want to advance the cause of individual liberty, or limited government, or fiscal responsibility, or enduring values. But if you are a Democrat, there is one overriding reason you came to Sacramento: to spend other people's money to fund programs. During the floor debates on the

subject of spending taxpayer dollars to buy energy, several Democrats rose in indignation. "This money is for our programs!" they shouted, expressing their dismay that anyone or anything should interfere with their *raison d'etre* as lawmakers. They were not concerned with fiscal prudence or government growth, but merely the interference this might cause with their pet social programs.

They need a good economy so they can tax it: This is Prime Minister Gladstone's putative principle brought into the lexicon of the present. Republicans want a robust economy. We want it because it means jobs, growth, prosperity and a higher standard of living for people. That economic growth improves the human condition is an end unto itself. But now you see some liberals reluctantly supporting capitalistic ideas for prosperity. They do this only because that prosperity provides the tax revenue base from which they derive money for social engineering. If there are no purchases, there is no sales tax. If there are no incomes, there is no income tax. Even more perniciously, the more wealth that exists, the higher taxes can be, with all the wealth used to fund socialism, rather than letting it raise living standards. They want your income to rise, but only so they can spend it.

THE STOCK MARKET IS NOW IMPORTANT TO THEM

California is one of the few taxing jurisdictions on earth that has no income taxation preference for capital gains. That is to say, capital gains income is taxed at the same rates as any other form of income, ignoring the fact that it represents the product of already taxed capital. This fact, plus the surging high-technology industries of the last few years, resulted in an interesting development. In the 2000/2001 fiscal year, 14 percent of the total general fund revenue of the state of California was derived from capital gains taxes on stocks, bonds and options. A rational person would conclude that our tax rate is too high and that inherently variable stock market gains are an inappropriate base for long-term budgeting. But our Democrat friends have instead

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proceeded to spend this windfall on increases for ongoing programs. So, rather than reduce reliance on this unstable source of income and stimulate economic activity by reducing capital gains taxes, they spent the money and committed to spend it every year going forward. So, as the stock market slumped, Democrats suddenly became interested. But they were not interested because they want the growth, only because it threatens their programs. Furthermore they are having a difficult time continuing to demagogue the stock market as a bastion of the rich now that over 60 percent of California families are invested in stocks in some way.

THERE IS NO LIMIT TO HOW MUCH WE CAN TAX OR SPEND

At the beginning of this legislative year, it was believed that there would be a budget surplus in the neighborhood of $5 billion. Accordingly, Democrats mobilized. They mobilized not to suggest any substantive tax relief, but to spend all of that surplus and more. Program after program was introduced and passed, many of which at the cost of many billions of dollars within just a couple of years. As Democrats introduced and outlined the programs they wanted to create or expand, it became clear that there is no limit as to their ability to spend virtually any amount of revenue increase. I witnessed the germination of new social and health and welfare programs that would literally have the ability to absorb a revenue growth of 25 percent or more in just a year on top of 38 percent growth in government spending over the last two years. I have come to believe that your taxes could be doubled, and it would still not be enough to fund all that Democrats want to spend.

GOVERNMENT EXISTS TO FORCE PEOPLE TO CONFORM TO OUR WAY OF THOUGHT

Other than spending money, the second main tenet of liberal thought is to use the force of government fiat to compel the populace to do, say and think liberal social ideology. Most legislation that doesn't spend money puts restrictions on employers, property owners or government agencies requiring them to celebrate some activity or special interest group and to ban or reject another. For example current legislation moving through the legislature in California requires acceptance of transvestites but rejects support for any group that would dare to suggest belief in God. Rather than allow individuals the freedom to join, accept, or reject either of these, today's liberals want to require public celebration of their social view and force those who do not agree to practice their beliefs out of civic view.

What can we do with this knowledge of the true intentions of the other side? First, we must communicate that California's Democrat Party is *not* the arbiter of moderation it claims to be. California is now the second most Democrat-controlled state in the union (behind only Hawaii in percentages of elected officials who are Democrats) and as such is on the leading edge of liberalism nationally.

Second, we must recognize the liberals' true intent when they muse over economic decline or the stock markets' malaise. Their one concern is to make sure that the government — *their* government — captures most of any growth that might someday occur. Their basic beliefs in a socialistic model are still intact.

And finally, we must resist tax increases no matter how compelling the conditions or argument may appear to be. We must resist them because they will always spend it in a place where government doesn't belong — and it will never be enough.

California has become the front line of liberal attack. We must take our place in the trenches as the first line of the defense of liberty. CPR

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REAGAN COUNTRY .... ALIVE AND WELL

Bruce Fein keynotes second Western Conservative Conference

Can human freedom find a sypathetic hearing in the land of Shiela Kuehl and the *Los Angeles Times?* It can. June's second annual Western Conservative Conference showcased a movement growing, thoughtful, energized.

ANYONE LOOKING FOR PROOF THAT THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA — widely and loudly pronounced a corpse in the media and elsewhere — still has discernible vital signs should have been at the Hacienda Hotel in Los Angeles the weekend of June 8, 9, and 10. The second annual Western Conservative Conference was held then, and at least *this* group of conservatives is ready to mount a counter-attack against the California liberal *zeitgeist.*

The official theme of the conference was "Remembering Reagan," but the unofficial *raison d'etre* and main topic of conversation was how to rescue what was once self-consciously proud "Reagan Country" from the fringe left that now calls the political shots. Especially encouraging to this native Californian and long-time conservative worker bee was the support the conference got from national conservative organizations.

The list of sponsors read like a *Who's Who* of the conservative movement: Richard Viguerie's Conservative HQ.com, the National Security Center, Eberle Communications, the *Washington Times National Weekly Edition,* the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, the Legal Affairs Council, *Human Events,* the American Conservative Union, Christian Voice, and the United States Intelligence Council, just to name a few. They were joined in sponsorship by California-based groups like the U.S. Justice Foundation, the Capitol Resource Institute, the California Republican Assembly, and the California Pro-Life Council. Regardless of what the national Republican political organizations may be thinking, the national conservative movement is clearly in no mood to "write off" California.

The bravest of the brave among California Republican elected officials were also there: Honorary conference Chairman Senator Ray Haynes was

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WILLIAM E. SARACINO

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joined by co-chairmen former Senator Dick Mountjoy and Senator Tom McClintock, along with Assemblymen Tony Strickland and Phil Wyman — five worthies with both many years of service to the conservative movement and the scars to prove their effectiveness. We should all hope to see more of the kind of encouraging cooperation that was evident at this conference between conservative elected officials and grass roots organizations.

Senator Tom McClintock

The conference began, unofficially, on Friday morning with a tour of the Reagan Presidential Museum. Nostalgia filled the air, as well as a renewed appreciation for what a giant our fortieth president was — a theme continued at the official conference kickoff, that evening's "Remembering Reagan" banquet, hosted by the Legal Affairs Counsel and the *Washington Times*. LAC President and Conference Chairman Richard Delgaudio introduced keynote speaker Bruce Fein, LAC general counsel and one of the nation's most respected conservative legal minds. Put on a par, by some, with Robert Bork and Justice Antonin Scalia, Fein served as deputy attorney general in the Ed Meese Justice Department.

Fein considered Reagan alongside the transcendent liberal presidential icon, JFK, contrasting Reagan's actual achievements with JFK's failures in the same arenas, putting both men in their proper place among chief executives (hint: alphabet aside, RWR comes before JFK). He fully credited Kennedy for his courageous tax cut, which provided the model for Reagan's 1981 reductions. That, though, ends the Gipper/Camelot similarities. Fein offered the following food for thought. Kennedy went to Berlin, uttered the memorable *"ich bin ein Berliner"* ... and nothing happened. Berlin remained a divided city; the Iron Curtain remained the Gulag's outer ramparts. Until, that is, Reagan in Berlin said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Less than two years later the wall was gone. The reason, of course, is that while JFK had fine rhetoric, Reagan backed up his words with policies. Kennedy produced a memorable sound bite. Reagan freed millions of people.

This hemisphere told the same story. Through the Cuban missile crisis and the Bay of Pigs invasion, JFK went through the motions of opposing communist expansion. And once again nothing happened. Until, that is, Reagan put solid policy behind the rhetoric, armed the Contras, united the hemisphere's democracies, and saw the fight through to its glorious end: El Salvador saved, Granada and Nicaragua liberated. Kennedy's action in Cuba produced a failed invasion and a trade-off of Soviet missiles in Cuba for American missiles in Turkey. Reagan produced a fundamental, irreversible shift in the hemisphere's geopolitical balance. JFK got credit in the history books for "staring down" Khrushchev when he did no such thing. Reagan got the Iran-Contra witch hunt for liberating millions of people and driving a stake through the heart of communist expansion in the Americas. Fein's enjoyable presentation enlightened the young folks who had never heard these facts before and reminded us not-so-young folks why Reagan should hold the title "great liberator" as well as "great communicator." The session closed with reminiscences of three home-grown Reaganites — former Senator Dick Mountjoy, Assemblyman Phil Wyman, and L.A. County Supervisor Mike Antonovich.

Saturday morning began with a breakfast talk on the United Nations's impact on U.S. sovereignty, delivered by Gary Kreep, executive director of the San Diego-based U.S. Justice Foundation. A colleague of mine in long-ago YAF adventures, Gary fights a critical battle through his conservative, "public interest" law firm, defending religious freedom, parental rights, and rule of law. His exceptionally informative talk was also exceptionally chilling: international "tribunals" and other U.N. sponsored extra-legal bodies represent a real and growing threat. Vigilance on this front is needed now more than ever.

Next, smaller workshops covered topics from rolling back the gas tax to insuring the viability of grass roots activity in modern politics. Lunch, sponsored by the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, featured remarks by the group's president, Alan Gottlieb, another long-time conservative activist, and a wonderful speech by Senator Tom McClintock entitled "Freedom and Firearms." Tom highlighted two modern ideas of government: the conservative, rooted in the Founding Fathers' 18th century affirmation that "all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights," and the liberal, nurtured by 19th century Germans Marx, Hegel, and Nietzsche, saying rights

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come not from God but from the state, which gives and takes them away as it pleases.

McClintock illustrated this view quoting his ultra-liberal Democrat colleague Shiela Kuehl from a debate on firearm legislation. "There is," she said, "only one constitutional right in the United States which is absolute and that is your right to believe anything you want." A chilling take on the "inalienable" rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But McClintock's response was worthy of this Churchill fan: "What rights have a slave? There is only one: a slave can think anything he wants as long as he doesn't utter it or act on it. He has no right to the fruit of his labor, no right to self defense, no right to raise his children, no right to contract with others for his betterment, no right to worship — except as his master allows. He has only the right to his own thoughts. All other rights are at the sufferance of his master — whether that master is a state or an owner." I urge everyone to read the full speech at McClintock's website, *www.TomMcClintock.com,* under "speeches."

General Richard Anson

The afternoon continued with breakout workshops, highlighted by Ray Haynes' presentation on faith-based initiatives and two sessions on the Red Chinese threat to the Panama Canal. Besides the senator, Haynes' panel included pastors from several inner-city churches. If President Bush could combine Haynes' eloquence on the subject with the pastors' fiery rhetoric and hands-on experience, "W"'s national faith-based initiative would be further along than it is. The room was alive with enthusiasm for these private-sector solutions to society's ills.

The first Red China/Panama workshop, hosted by Freedom Center Foundation, featured Dr. Tomas Cabal, a renowned Panamanian professor and ABC journalist. Cabal provided alarming evidence of Red Chinese penetration of the Canal Zone. Using mainly commercial fronts (which the communist government controls), Red China has established a significant Panamanian presence, with serious implications for U.S. national security.

The long and distinguished military career of Major General Richard Anson, USA (ret.), who led the second workshop on Red China and Panama, included service in the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and two tours of duty as Commander of U.S. ground forces in Panama. The general presented a slide show of the recent National Security Center-organized and U.S. Intelligence Council co-sponsored trip to the Panama Canal. The slides — many taken from a helicopter the group used to tour the Canal — would have been fascinating alone; Anson's commentary made them more so. Perhaps most disturbing in Anson's talk were the dual facts of American dependence on the Canal in the event of conflict almost anywhere in the world and the vulnerability of that waterway to terrorist attack and shutdown. One particularly chilling point: if high explosives damaged the Gatun Dam and the lake water drained out, it would take *four years* to restore the lake's water level sufficiently to return the Canal to operation. Considering that the United States has essentially abandoned this vital strategic asset, the General urged everyone to contact their congressmen and Senators to demand the U.S. renew its security presence in the Canal.

Saturday evening's banquet was preceded by a reception for all delegates, honoring U.S. military veterans, hosted by the Retired Military Officers Advisory Board of the National Security Center. The banquet itself, co-hosted by the U.S. Intelligence Council and the National Security Center, featured a keynote speech by Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO). Tancredo, in just his second term, is quickly becoming a conservative star, unafraid to speak the truth on principle. He laid out the Red Chinese threat to the United States in a well-reasoned, alarming picture of the PRC that should receive more attention in Washington. Tancredo, noting Red China's long history of aggressive behavior, said its rulers foster a "raging nationalism" that seeks expression "in expanding borders and a harsh xenophobia."

He said China's communists consider the United States their ultimate enemy, and as with all history's tyrannies, "nothing we can do by way of appeasement [will] change that." He said the Chinese desire for "hegemony," an intrinsic element of their national identity, is divided into three parts: first, taking Taiwan and controlling the South China Sea; second, extension of PRC power over the land mass representing the maximum extent of the old "celestial empire"; and third, a desire for global hegemony — "a worldwide contest with the U.S. to replace

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REORGAN

Would it professionalize the CRP? Or submerge it?

He controls no candidates, campaigns, or GOP office holders, but the CRP chairman is blamed for years of turmoil and too many defeats. Will a state Party overhaul cure GOP woes? Or merely end grass roots' last claim to power?

For California Republicans, early warnings began sounding in 1989. Popular GOP Governor George Deukmejian suddenly declined to seek a third term and no likely conservative successor was available to replace him. Californian Ronald Reagan had just completed one of the most successful presidencies in Republican history. His conservative ideas held center stage in the nation's political debate: peace through strength, low tax rates, less government interference in our lives, more respect for America's essential institutions — religion and the family — judges who follow the law, a healthy skepticism about state power's ability to do good. Even George Bush, who scoffed at Reagan's supply-side tax cuts eight years earlier, seemed to have learned something about winning Republican politics. His 1988 victory topped-off a thoroughly Reaganesque campaign orchestrated by Lee Atwater and keynoted by Bush's stirring stand-up-for-ordinary-Americans pledge: "Read-My-Lips: No New Taxes."

But here in California, no dominant, or even conspicuous, statewide political leader appeared to champion these winning themes. Republicans, looking frantically around for a likely gubernatorial nominee, found only Senator Pete Wilson — *Wilson*, the anti-Reagan, chiefly known for his disdain for the rank-and-file conservatives forming the state's GOP backbone. That no true Reaganite had been groomed for this critical moment signaled a decade of trouble to come. And come it did: eight long years of intra-GOP warfare pitting Republican foot soldiers against their titular leader, a general alienated from his own army's driving political ideas and goals.

Since then, predictable GOP electoral failure has brought a prolonged debate over what is wrong and how to fix it. Attention today is focused on a new "solution": a proposed overhaul of the California Republican Party's power structure championed by businessman Gerald L. Parsky, the George W. Bush White House's (or at least Carl Rove's) man in California.

Parsky crafted the Party bylaw make-over in his role as chairman of a special CRP Reform and Restructuring Committee. Although it's a lengthy document, one primary proposition lies at its foundation: that the state GOP is in trouble because the California Party chairman has too much power. As Parsky wrote recently to GOP activists, his plan provides "a 'checks and balances' system" to curb "unilateral or impulsive action" by an "individual officer" while still leaving "the basic authority of the CRP chairman to set policy and extend political leadership over the Party ... unchanged." A broad critique of the California Republican Party is advanced to support this proposal — as articulated, for instance, by Byron York in *National Review* May 29: "Badly damaged by a long list of political missteps," York wrote, "the California GOP is today essentially a volunteer operation, without professional management, strategists, a communications operation, or any of the other necessities of top-level politics." He then blames the Party for being "woefully ineffective in responding to the attacks of Gov. Gray Davis, who has accused Bush of 'turning a blind eye to the bleeding and hemorrhaging' in California" during the energy crisis.

Mr. York's notion that the state Party is, or ever has been, without professional management will no doubt come as a surprise to a long list of quite professional executive, political, communications, and fundraising directors and many others who have kept the Party functioning over the past decade or so. Mr. York's implication that "Republican" failure to respond effectively to Gray Davis is somehow the state *Party's* fault fails to distinguish the formal Party structure from the much larger category of state GOP candidates, office holders, donors, interest groups, and other people, most of whom are in a better position than is the state Party to respond effectively to Democrat attacks. In the late '80s and early '90s, I served several years as CRP communications director and can assure Mr. York that reporters don't much care what the state Party thinks about Davis's remarks. Responding to

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By **John Kurzweil** EDITOR

IZATION

them is the job of elected GOP office holders and candidates such as Secretary of State Bill Jones or Senate Republican Leader Jim Brulte. The main problem is that there are now too few high-profile Republican office holders to do the responding. Why that is so is, of course, the main topic under debate. Here, I merely point out that the Party's job is to raise money, spend it effectively according to a good political plan, and build an effective volunteer structure to register voters and get them to the polls. A good CRP communications director can build solid press contacts, feeding them stories behind the scenes — something I am sure that Rob Stutzman, the Party's current fully professional communications head (hired by Shawn Steel), is doing. But taking the lead or even playing any consistently prominent public role in the political debate is something the Party cannot and is not expected to do.

California Political Week newsletter reported three often-raised criticisms of recent Party activity more relevant to Parsky's proposals than are Mr. York's points:

First, former Chairman John McGraw's hiring of Jon Fleischman as CRP executive director. "No one doubts Fleischman had political skills," *Calpeek* reported, "but sources believe McGraw selected Fleischman based more on his conservative ideology than on his ability to run the Party." *Calpeek* reported that a confidential October 1999 CRP *Management Review* concluded Fleischman lacked "the necessary management skills [and] experience to be an effective ED."

Second, McGraw's decision last year to take no position on the official CRP pre-primary slate mailer regarding Proposition 26 in exchange for $50,000 from the "Yes on 26" campaign. Had it passed, 26, which the GOP Central Committee had already formally opposed, would have reduced from 2/3rds to 50 percent the vote required to pass local bond measures. It was widely seen as an end-run around Proposition 13 because such bond measures can bring higher property taxes. McGraw's deal caused an uproar when it became known and the $50,000 was returned, although it was then too late to correct the slate mailer — in effect, a substantial campaign donation to Yes on 26 compounding the mistake of the non-opposing slate card.

Gerald L. Parsky

Third, McGraw's decision, also last year, to contribute $10,000 to a lawsuit seeking to overturn three GOP legislative primary elections. In each case, the candidates favored by a majority of Republican voters had lost, under the state's Open Primary law, to candidates who owed their victories to non-Republican voters. Although the Open Primary had been declared unconstitutional, the lawsuits failed to overturn the results of the three elections.

It is to address such criticisms as these that Parsky proposes his "'checks and balances' system" to curb "unilateral or impulsive action" by an "individual officer" while still leaving "the basic authority of the CRP chairman to set policy and extend political leadership over the Party ... unchanged." His plan transfers much of the chairman's authority to the Party's board of directors and, through it, to the top staff position, formerly the executive director and now to be renamed "chief operating officer" — COO.

Parsky's main opponent within the Party is current Chairman Shawn Steel, who agrees that the chairman's power *should* be trimmed, but says Parsky's plan goes too far. CRP Treasurer Doug Boyd, long-time CRP activist Dr. Barbara Stone, and Southern Region Vice-

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Chairman Lois Godfrey agree with Steel. They have submitted a more moderate restructuring proposal, taking Parsky's plan as their starting place, reducing the chairman's power and beefing up the newly-named COO position, but leaving both the chairman and treasurer, whose authority Parsky also severely trims back, with more substantial roles to fill.

These contrasting proposals are instructive, particularly with reference to the idea that California Republicans' problems stem from a top position holding too much unaccountable power, resulting in a leader unwilling to compromise or to work to build a consensus before moving forward. Despite assurances that his plan leaves "the basic authority of the CRP chairman to set policy and extend political leadership over the Party ... unchanged," Parsky really makes the chairman little more than a figurehead. The position is no longer designated the Party's "chief executive officer," but instead its "chief spokesperson." Where the chairman exercised "general supervision, direction, and control of the [Party's] business and activities," Parsky's amendments say he "shall represent the Committee and Party" as its public face. The amendments remove the chairman's authority to determine CRP staff and the make-up of the Party's Operations and other committees, and reduce his control over use of Party funds. "Ultimate authority would no longer reside with the chair, which is an elected position [of the Central Committee]," a CRP activist said, "but with the Board, which could be dominated by office holders and donors not elected to any Party post by the members."

Mr. Parsky has repeatedly demanded that his plan be accepted with no amendments of any kind. According to several Party officials and activists, he has backed up this demand with repeated threats to use his influence to starve California's Party of funds by keeping the president and other White House and administration officials away from CRP fund raising events. He is now said to be preparing to pack the Party's September convention, which is expected to vote on his plan, with as many newly-minted associate members carrying voting proxies as necessary to force his proposal through with no amendments. This is called hardball and it may be *realpolitic*, but it hardly bespeaks a man uncomfortable with "unilateral or impulsive action" by an individual, at least so long as the individual is Gerald Parsky.

In contrast, his opponents agree with reducing the chairman's role, differing on the degree to which it should be reduced — that is, they offer a compromise which Parsky flatly rejects. Early in this process, Steel, trying to build consensus, gave Parsky his job as head of the Reform and Restructuring Committee, also naming to the committee his arch-rival, Brooks Firestone, even after two bitter, hard-fought battles with Firestone first for the Party's vice-chairman post and then for chairman. Indeed, some conservatives fault Steel for going too far in accommodating his opponents when he did not have to, saying he created this situation himself. Again, this may mean Steel is not in Parsky's league when it comes to hardball, but wasn't the problem supposed to be too much unbending hardball?

As to the specific criticisms raised in *Calpeek:*

First, every political operation considers "ideology" in filling staff positions. It is nonsense to pretend otherwise or to suggest that "competence" will ever veto political orientation in naming top staff. The battle in the CRP is over political philosophy, as represented in such concrete items as the state Party's platform plank that supports returning the abortion issue to the states by overturning *Roe v. Wade.* No matter how the power is divided up, someone or some faction will emerge on top. Does anyone suppose Brooks Firestone, who supports Parsky's plan, would name a pro-life COO if the choice was his or his faction's to make? On the contrary, he would certainly pick a dedicated pro-choicer or at least a dependable yes-man. Contrasting McGraw's and Fleischman's "conservative ideology" with "competence" is liberalspeak, a language in which anyone to one's right is not only incompetent but also unbending and all sorts of other stock terribles, all synonyms for "principled." And anyone who thinks a committee (the board) is less able than a chief executive to name an incompetent staffer should recall that a camel is a horse constructed by a committee.

Second, Proposition 26. McGraw is routinely blamed both for making the deal and for compounding it by sending back the money. But it was the *omnicompetent* board of directors, in the midst of its fit over the slate card, that voted to *force McGraw to return the money.* It is a mystery how this episode argues that the Party will be more professional and free from ill-considered, "impulsive" action and foolishness by transferring power from the chairman to the board of directors.

Third, the Open Primary lawsuits: the premise that everyone agrees joining these was a mistake is false. The principle involved — that Republicans should not be saddled with nominees chosen by their opponents — was certainly right, as the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a particularly scathing opinion throwing out the Open Primary. Even so, was the strategic decision ill-advised? That's a judgment call, with two sides both eminently defensible. To trot this out as "proof" of "incompetence" won't hold. As strong a case could be made, and, indeed, *was* made widely and often in the press and in GOP circles, that Jim Brulte and Curt Pringle were wasting resources and sowing intra-Party discord by recalling Paul Horcher and Doris Allen. This is just one more judgment call, and thus of no weight in a debate over professionalizing the Party through a *structural* reorganization.

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When did the GOP disconnect from the real people of California?

The real issue in this debate is the cause of the California GOP's decline. Just now, all attention is focused on the power structure of the state Central Committee. That's not surprising, given the Party's enhanced role under Proposition 34. But for this very reason Republicans would be wise to consider carefully how they arrived at their present predicament before setting about making repairs. The "donor community" is said to be "uneasy" about entrusting its money to the state Party after repeated Republican electoral failures. Mistakes *have* been made at the CRP, no doubt, but do they really account to any decisive, or even significant, extent for the broad GOP reversals of recent years? Has bungling been restricted to the state Party? Will this plan do more to insure, or to discourage, competence in CRP operations? Is the current battle over reorganization really divorced from the central, decades-long contest still raging between starkly opposing visions of what the state GOP should be? Quick answers to these questions invite over-simplification, especially if they are considered without reference to the historical context from which this debate has erupted. The state Party is an organic whole with a life of its own, intricate growth patterns and intertwined networks of cause and effect growing increasingly complex over time. Finding ways to restore a once-healthy structure would seem to require, at the least, going back to consider the state of things when the structure functioned well, and what changes since then account for its poor functioning now.

The most recent Golden Age of Republican grass roots politics in California began in the 1940s and '50s, blossomed in the Reagan gubernatorial years of the '60s and '70s, and, it is generally conceded (although, as I say, the causes are not agreed upon), has been in decline since at least the mid-1980s. With a few notable exceptions, perhaps most obviously in Orange County under long-time Chairman Tom Fuentes, the work of developing and putting to work armies of volunteers to register voters and turn out the vote on election day has, over the past three decades, shifted away from the formal GOP county and state Party structures. Some candidates (those inclined and able to sustain an active volunteer base) and single issue organizations, most prominently gun owner and pro-life groups, have filled in, but overall GOP Party building has declined.

California's grass roots "golden age" began with Richard Nixon who, beginning with his first congressional campaigns, built a local, people-based political operation that became a prototype grass-roots vote-generating machine: the United Republican Finance Committee of Los Angeles County. By the 1960s, URFC was electing local judges, city councilmen, state legislators, and congressmen, and contributing to carrying California for all GOP top-of-the-ticket candidates.

Serious, substantial community leaders were actively involved, including many members of what became Ronald Reagan's Kitchen Cabinet: Holmes Tuttle, Henry Salvatori, Justin Dart, and many others. These were mostly self-made men, individualists who had built their companies from the ground up. Salvatori had worked in the oil fields, Dart personally ran pharmacies. They brought to politics a hands-on passion and personal commitment rarely seen in today's Republican corporate donors. During Reagan's 1970 gubernatorial election campaign, Democrat nominee Jesse Unruh staged a news conference in front of Salvatori's home, complaining about Reagan's "fat cat" friends. Both Henry and his wife emerged from the house and took Unruh on in an impromptu debate for the media, "getting in the candidate's face," as one old-timer recalls it. It is difficult to imagine a corporate climber like Don Bren behaving similarly — almost as difficult as it is to imagine a Democrat gubernatorial candidate bothering to confront him.

Dignified corporate image? "Henry didn't give a rip," a GOP activist said — he cared about the direction of the state, not just about his narrow, personal interest, and he did so as passionately as the most devoted grass roots volunteer. Such men and women built Republican victories because they believed in Republican principles and loathed the liberals' effete scorn for hard-working business owners.

In those days, Republican candidates — successful ones, anyway — knew what seems obvious, but which somehow now escapes many otherwise sagacious Republican political operatives: consistently victorious political movements must recruit a broad following of supporters among ordinary people, not necessarily *all* the people, but at least among those key constituencies drawn naturally to the movement's broad platform. For Republicans, and indeed for any effective al-

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ternative to the materialist, statist, special interest, politically correct ideology driving the Democrat Party, plainly these key constituencies include that Democrat ideology's natural opponents: sincere religious believers, champions of liberty, honest folks working to sustain themselves as free as possible from government handouts, and people too psychologically stable and devoted to essential institutions (*i.e.*, the family, or offshoots like the Boy Scouts) to allow themselves to be swept away by the various politically-correct liberal manias that rage for a time and are gone, leaving social and economic wreckage in their wake.

Some candidates come by their affinity for these real people naturally. As Charlton Heston wrote of Ronald Reagan (in Peter Hannaford's *Recollections of Reagan*, 1997, William Morrow), "What I remember most is not that he had won by so much, but that to be successful in politics at that level you have to really love it — and Ronald Reagan did. It was the most fun he could imagine; to go out and campaign and say to people, 'Let me tell you why I want you to vote for me and what my vision is for the country.'" Not that Reagan had a monopoly on reaching and motivating the grass roots at their level. As mentioned already, Richard Nixon, endowed by God with a more typical share of personal charm than Reagan's, nonetheless knew he had to rally his troops, as his L.A. County political machine showed.

Even Gerald Ford, who had about as much love as Pete Wilson for religious conservatives, knew enough to cultivate them.

He took that wisdom with him to the Oval Office. "The Nixon White House, probably more than any other," Lyn Nofziger wrote in his 1992 memoir *Nofziger* (Regnery), "was geared to rallying public support behind the president." Even Gerald Ford, who had about as much love as Pete Wilson for religious conservatives, knew enough to cultivate them. During Ford's 1976 campaign against Jimmy Carter, Nofziger wrote, "[Stu] Spencer asked me to put out a campaign tabloid newspaper we called *Heartland*, which attacked Carter from the standpoint of the religious right." This atmosphere, created in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s by both money people and political leaders, infused volunteers with energy. I recall once seeing an old Republican 16-mm film — it had to date from the 1960s — featuring Ronald Reagan and John Wayne standing on a dock, apparently near Wayne's Newport Beach home, and delivering a hearty pep talk and instructional seminar to GOP volunteers on the vital importance and ins-and-outs of effective voter registration drives. It couldn't help but warm the cockles of any good conservative's heart, and it moved them to work. A long-time GOP activist recalls late '60s San Gabriel Valley volunteers maintaining shoe boxes of file cards, one per voter, recording registration, voting history, and comments made to precinct walkers — all written down by hand!

A lot of the business leaders and political activists accompanied Reagan to the state and, later, the national political levels, which helped diminish local grass roots activism. Also, many conservatives' concluded that, with Reagan elected president, the war was won and the time come for them to fade out of politics. But another element entered as well: a radically different attitude among GOP political leaders and a shift in the personality, style, and political motivation of GOP major donors that began to take hold in the late 1980s and, with a vengeance, in the Pete Wilson '90s. A key figure in the new direction was George Bush the elder. Nofziger, writing of his early-'70s work under Bob Dole's RNC chairmanship, recalls

> a young man named John Lofton [whom Nofziger assigned] to edit a weekly newsletter called Monday .... Lofton had enough gall to divide into three parts. He would call anybody on the telephone, drive his victim crazy with rude, blunt, unanswerable have-you-stopped-beating-your-wife-type questions, and print his frustrated, outraged, incoherent replies. Or note with glee that his victim had hung up on him. It was great fun for John and *made great reading for Republicans, who for too long had seen their leaders on the receiving end of this sort of treatment* .... We got great results, with even the Eastern liberal press and the news services picking up his [Lofton's] lead story almost every week. Dole's successor as national chairman, George H.W. Bush, then in the early part of his kinder and gentler stage, killed it. Too bad. It would have helped him as president." [emphasis added]

Somewhere else in the book, Nofziger notes the usual reaction of "moderate" Republicans to vicious, unfair liberal attacks on GOP conservatives — rather than rally to defend their colleagues and their Party, they routinely join in, carrying the left's water by repeating whatever politically correct charge their own enemies are hurling (usually some variation on "fanatical," "narrow," "divisive," and "mean"). It always brings the "moderates" fawning press coverage even as it demoralizes and divides their Party. It's a bad habit with a long pedigree. Before the 1966 California gubernatorial primary, Reagan attended a meeting of black Republicans along with the other candidates, George Christopher and William Penn Patrick. Both

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Christopher and Patrick were implying pretty generally that Reagan was a racist. Reagan, less used to dealing with "moderates" than later, reacted angrily and the *L.A. Times* skewered him the next day, no doubt to the equal delight of Christopher, Patrick, and Pat Brown.

When he became president, the elder Bush "not only had no sense that he had to build support," Nofziger said in a 1993 *California Political Review* interview, "he went out and drove support away. They set out, right after he was elected, to get rid of the Reagan people .... They did nothing at all to keep together the Reagan coalition: the blue collar workers, the ethnic Catholics, the fundamentalists, up until the very end when it was too late."

But Pete Wilson outdid anyone in bally-ragging the "right wing" to the delight of the liberal press. A typical performance was his 1991 campaign to punish GOP legislators who resisted his massive, and ultimately disastrous, tax increase — at that time the largest for any state in U.S. history. As Tom McClintock has shown often, Wilson's tax hike sent state government into a prolonged fiscal tailspin that ended only when most of the increase had either expired or was repealed. At the time, however, Pete publicly chastised his fellow Republicans' efforts toward fiscal sanity as "political grandstanding" and "partisan posturing." That was enough for the *L.A. Times'* George Skelton. In a column headed "Assembly Republicans — Wilson's Big Frustration," he said these creatures "routinely are called 'ideologues,' 'obstructionists' and 'cavemen,' and on occasion 'ignoramuses' or even 'orangutans' .... [people] who would have a tough time holding a job in the 'real world'." Then he dropped the mask of civility and got mean.

Wilson launched a full-fledged intra-Party war in 1992, fielding a statewide slate of anti-conservative legislative candidates in an effort to cleanse the GOP legislative caucuses — another "moderate" show of "competence": his people lost almost every primary. He also set about "reforming" the state Party to better serve his anti-conservative program. That largely failed too, so next Wilson attempted to sabotage the Party's work, in one famous episode calling his delegates and asking them to boycott a critical state convention because he feared it would oppose his policies. " ... the so-called 'moderate' Republicans," Nofziger commented at the time, "always wanted to keep other people out of the Party. The Party was their own little playground and they didn't want to let people in unless they agreed with them 100 percent." But what about their "Big Tent"? "Oh yeah," Nofziger replied, "that's right — there's a lot of room in the tent, but not many people."

Wilson mellowed a bit after Ron Unz, a political unknown mounting a conservative challenge, took one-third of the GOP primary vote from him in 1994. Perhaps concluding he'd underestimated conservatism's wide appeal, he championed, at least publicly, welfare reform, ending race preferences, and other conservative ideas.

But the anti-conservative, anti-GOP-grass-roots torch has passed along to others. Just last year, a group of wealthy businessmen and Republicans known chiefly for affiliations with things like "Republicans for Clinton" spent nearly $500,000 — bankrolled by Orange County land developers, among others — of potential Republican campaign funds trying (and, as usual, failing) to knock off Orange County GOP Chairman Tom Fuentes, whom they accused of being, what else? "ineffective" — *Tom Fuentes* who preserves one of the state's few remaining effective grass roots operations for voter registration and GOTV.

"The hypocrisy is stark," wrote veteran campaign strategist Duane Dichiara in *CPR* last year. "To an endless cant of 'Party unity' and demands for effective election programs, this opposition spends lavishly to replace winning leadership with people whose track record of electoral success and experience in the drudgery of managing a major party operation are both nil." Dichiara reminded readers that the developers "have a long-standing conflict with Fuentes over the local Party's adamant refusal to support county tax hikes or bond measures." Moderation and effective politics, that is, are defined as dumping your political principles and screwing a major part of your base constituency — homeowners and all taxpayers — when it suits the greed of wealthy GOP donors. The funny thing about these drives to make the Party more "inclusive," "professional," and "effective" is that they invariably fail to gain popular support and usually reek of political naivete and incompetence. Democrats' enthusiasm for them is easy to understand, but what is the appeal for Republicans?

Who lost 2000?

Every liberal from George Christopher and William Penn Patrick to George Skelton and Brooks Firestone say political reality demands that Republicans drop conservative principles if they want to win. Conservative reluctance to compromise drives away voters they say; those who won't see this are fools not competent to carry out the Party's essential tasks. They imply that Bush's defeat here last year and earlier losses to Gray Davis and legislative Democrats all trace to this cause.

Now Gerald Parsky steps forward to say, one, that the GOP must become more "inclusive" — which no one disputes, until that is defined to mean forgetting about the right to life and the Second Amendment and, more broad-

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ly, adopting a Wilsonite flexibility toward compromise on every question — and, two, that it must "professionalize" — which, in turn, is opposed only when defined as replacing principled conservatives with people whose first passion is political campaign technology — a charitable way to describe a willingness to do or say anything that seems expedient at any given moment. Understanding last year's (and earlier) Republican failure in California requires a more realistic evaluation of two basic questions: first, what was done wrong in 2000? and, second, who did it?

'Millions were spent on recycled ads with limited relevance for California .... California needed TV spots with real people, the right message, to reach targeted constituencies.'

Ronald Reagan won elections. He did not fly from appeals to broad principle, nor did he drop those principles when it came to details and execution (except now and then on judges and taxes, which always brought political disaster). He launched his political career in 1964 by putting the real issue of our politics in unmistakable terms:

> And this idea that government is beholden to the people, that it has no other source of power except the sovereign people, is still the newest and most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man. This is the issue of this election. Whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capital can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves.
>
> You and I are told increasingly that we have to choose between a left or right, but I would like to suggest that there is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down — up to man's age-old dream — the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with law and order — or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism, and regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would trade our freedom for security have embarked on this downward course.

Reagan's famous optimism about the good is here, but so is something rarely heard from later Republicans: a willingness to describe the evil alternative and to point directly to its source: anti-freedom liberalism. George W. Bush won the White House in 2000 because a bare minimum of Americans understood viscerally that the issue was this same essential moral question and that the evil answer to it was represented by Bill Clinton's broad moral depravity, an answer Al Gore appeared ready to carry forward. While no one thought Gore shared Clinton's infantile inability to control his gluttonous sexual appetite, he couldn't seem to avoid telling even stupid, unnecessary lies in public. That convinced enough people they were voting on Clinton II and that the moral alternative, the choice to move *up* rather than *down*, was Bush (which, by the way, is why the last-minute pre-election disclosure of Bush's quarter-century-old drunk driving arrest damaged him).

But Reagan did not just rely on voters' visceral sense that his was the moral course. He regularly, repeatedly, and in detail explained how *the* issue played out in the everyday lives of real people. The Bush campaign in California could have done the same, employing high-profile education and property tax controversies to tap into key voting blocks, but did not do so.

Unlike Bob Dole four years earlier who never had a chance here, W. started out competitive in California. Respected pollster and campaign strategist Arnold Steinberg reported July 6, 2000, on *National Review Online* that "the new Steinberg survey ... places Bush at 37 percent and Gore at 40 percent among registered voters" with Bush enjoying "a clear lead over Gore among independent voters .... Bush wins among homeowners, loses decisively among renters. Bush would benefit from a strong campaign opposing Gray Davis's measure to raise local property taxes for schools." This last point referred to the November ballot's Proposition 39, essentially a second try to pass Proposition 26 with the slight refinement that the vote required to pass bonds would be 55 percent rather than 26's simple majority. Bush's decision not to talk about "specific initiatives on ballots" eliminated this opportunity to establish a clear connection in voters' minds linking Bush's appeal to broad conservative principles with a concrete, on-my-front-porch concern facing real people. It could have maximized turnout among pro-Bush homeowners and possibly even mobilized the Proposition 13 coalition, moving campaign momentum strongly in Bush's direction. It never happened.

On September 25, 2000, the *Los Angeles Times*, remarkably, all but endorsed Bush over Gore in a lead editorial — "Definite Choices on Schools" — which questioned the cost of Gore's "cradle-to-grave" program ("an astonishing $115 billion") while crediting Bush for his "tenure as an 'education governor'" with a "more real-world feel for education." It concluded that "Bush's leadership quotient in education is more impressive than that of Gore." The next day, Steinberg commented that "With this editorial, George Bush has quintessential third-party

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validation, and not just in California, where the *LA Times'* words should be enshrined, immediately, in paid issues advertising. Indeed, this editorial could be a turning point in a national campaign where Gore aims to reduce Bush's education policy to a caricature .... The Bush campaign needs to drop its beltway formulas and canned advertising and seize the moment, here and everywhere else."

Judging by Steinberg's running *NR Online* commentary throughout the campaign, the Bush effort never followed this advice, on this or other issues. A month after the *Times* editorial appeared, Steinberg told how GOP presidential campaigns handle funds: "Contributions from wealthy Californians are sent back to Washington where a portion never again leaves the beltway. The balance, admittedly still quite large, is returned (with strings) to California." Steinberg mentioned this process in relation to a campaign opportunity presented by LA Mayor Dick Riordan's heartfelt endorsement of Bush as the candidate who "understands what's needed in education" and "who is not divisive." "[Riordan's] sincere message," Steinberg wrote, "could resonate in television and radio commercials that connect with women voters. No wonder Bush/Cheney California Chairman Gerry Parsky has promised, finally if belatedly, to use Riordan in advertisements in the state.

"But can Parsky deliver? It's hard to imagine the Washington folks creating an effective spot with Riordan looking directly into the camera and dramatically telling it like it is. Recycled Bush/RNC Victory 2000 television advertising here has used voice-over with graphics, rather than people saying something. Inexplicably, there's been no radio."

The Bush campaign's generic, impersonal advertising became a Steinberg theme, which he summarized in an election day commentary: "millions were spent here ... on recycled ads with limited relevance for California, less impact on its voters. Obviously, California needed television spots with real people, with the right message, to reach targeted constituencies. And serious mail, not fluff." The next day, he wrote that "for once, California was not a net exporter of campaign dollars. But, as reported, the RNC squandered the money here on formula beltway-produced television advertising lacking any production values. *The RNC actually refused polling data that showed the ads to be ineffectual.* Similarly, millions of dollars were spent on mailings that failed to target women, independent voters, and other key groups with messages that matter. Nor was there an aggressive surrogate program or earned-media effort, let alone, for example, well-placed op-eds regularly spinning the Bush message .... True to form, Washington insiders now will say California is not winnable. We know better." [emphasis added]

In late November, in a final salvo, Steinberg wrote that "Historically, the RNC has raised money effectively but spend it ineffectively, including legally laundering money through the California Republican Party and other state parties *to favored beltway vendors outflanked by more competent Democrat strategists* .... Thus, even a respected strategist like California Bush campaign chair, state Sen. Jim Brulte, had one hand, maybe both, tied behind his back." [emphasis added]

The 2000 campaign included lots more incompetence damaging to Bush: Silicon Valley political neophyte Tim Draper's disastrous $30 million school "voucher" campaign that drove up teacher (i.e., Gore voter) turnout — $30 million that could have elected several pro-educational choice GOP legislators; Republican liberal Tom Campbell's nearly invisible U.S. Senate campaign with, among its few memorable moments, a TV spot Steinberg described as featuring "Campbell, looking like he's on something, [attacking] 'Dianne' for being too hard-line on drugs"; business billionaires, with Pete Wilson serving as cheerleader, lavishly funding Proposition 39, the initiative to extract hundreds of thousands of dollars from property owners of modest means — great for Bush's conservative Republican base, as was the specter of heavy business spending being diverted from Republican to Democrat legislative candidates, the corporate types having entered their best rats-jumping-ship mode.

But now the scalping knives are out for the CRP power structure because, we are told, last year's chairman, no longer around, made mistakes hiring staff and acted foolishly over a slate mailing regarding an initiative that lost anyway. Who ran Victory 2000? Who decided Bush would take no position on Proposition 39? Who planned the major paid and earned media campaign for Bush in California? Who ignored "polling data that showed the Bush ads to be ineffectual" and "favored beltway vendors outflanked by more competent Democrat strategists"? Whose incompetence and willingness to place self-interest above the good of the candidate drove up Democrat turn-out and demoralized the GOP rank-and-file, damaging Bush here? Who? The Republican National Committee, Gerald Parsky, Jim Brulte, Pete Wilson,

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Tim Draper, Tom Campbell, Silicon Valley political neophytes, business community political prostitutes, and, 'way on down the list, as a footnote, some decisions may have been made by John McGraw and CRP staff that actually contributed significantly to the debacle. About the only thing those really responsible for losing in 2000 *don't* control is the day-to-day functioning of the CRP, but they mean to address that oversight through reorganization.

Who is Gerry Parsky?

Gerald L. Parsky is a "survivor," says one influential California political activist who has observed him closely in action at the Party's highest levels, "although he is tone-deaf when it comes to politics — he apparently buys [former Assembly GOP Leader Rod] Pacheco's line that the way for Republicans to win is to go 'Democrat lite.' He's politically naive, but he's very good at getting credit for Gerry Parsky. He knows how to get himself on the inside track. Pacheco has convinced a lot of money guys to buy into the 'Democrat lite' idea. That's Parsky's base in making this move." Parsky plan defenders dismiss such talk. State Senate GOP Leader Jim Brulte, showing little patience for "the small group that doesn't want changes," says it's not a matter of moderates vs. conservatives, "but a question of accountability." He notes that as Republican leader he's not allowed to make unilateral decisions. So, why should the Party chairman? Citing several such unilateral decisions by recent CRP chairmen, Brulte suggested they either invite cronyism or political ineptness. In his view, "two heads are better than one, and three better than two, and that's what all these reforms are designed to do." Others suggest that, if Brulte seriously believes this, he is more naive than most people think. A former Wilson administration official said "nobody in business would support this [kind of organizational structure] in his own company. Somebody has to be responsible. The board cannot maintain a consensus day in and day out. It can't work." As another GOP activist said, under the Parsky reorganization, "there's a paid professional [the COO] in charge, and the rest is hoopla. It strips the Party process from the political process," leaving the COO "professional" free to operate outside the reach of the conservative-dominated Central Committee or its elected officers.

So who is Gerald L. Parsky? Another in a long line of "pragmatic" Wilsonites — at best unconcerned about, at worst contemptuous of, the Party's core conservative principles? Or merely an accomplished businessman, used to getting things done in a calm, professional way and now lending these skills to help out his friend in the White House whip into shape a state Party not structured to meet its role as a major player in the nation's most politically important state? Maybe he's a combination of both. In his one opportunity to affect government policy directly — crafting a plan for selecting Bush judicial nominees to California-based federal district courts — Parsky negotiated an agreement with Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (before Democrats took control of the U.S. Senate) to require approval of all Bush nominees by half-Republican/half-Democrat panels. Almost immediately, Rep. Chris Cox's name vanished as a possible Bush judicial nominee. Cox, who would have made an excellent conservative judge (i.e., one whose decisions are based on law), had been vehemently opposed by Boxer who knew how effective Cox would be. "They [Parsky] capitulated before Jeffords [left the GOP]," said a close observor of judicial politics in California, "without a *quid pro quo* on use of blue slips on court of appeals nominees, so this was abject judicial surrender." Leftwingers like USC law Professor Erwin Chemerinsky reacted as if the arrangement were a dream come true, bubbling with praise for the plan's "bipartisanship" and its likely outcome: "moderate nominees" — no conservatives. Parsky, in short, found a way to move the president's nominees through confirmation in a calm, professional way: preemptive surrender. If he grieves over the deal's cost to the conservative cause, he has yet to let the public know.

Wilson appointed Parsky to the University of California Board of Regents in 1996. His official Regents biography tells us he "is chairman of Aurora Capitol Partners, L.P., a Los Angeles-based investment firm specializing in the acquisition of U.S. companies. Mr. Parsky received his bachelor's degree in English from Princeton University and his juris doctorate degree from the University of Virginia Law School. From 1977 to 1992, he was affiliated with the law firm of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher, specializing in international corporate and tax law. He served as assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury Department from 1974 to

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1977." A member of the Board of Visitors for the University of California's Anderson Graduate School of Business and of the advisory council for the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, Parsky is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a trustee of the George Bush Presidential Library Foundations and of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation.

Parsky commutes to work via Gulfstream jet from his home in Rancho Santa Fe to his office in Westwood. After serving as the youngest ever assistant secretary of the treasury, Parsky went on to become a multimillionaire venture capitalist investor with international clients, widespread clout, and what one recent commentator characterized as "a smooth ability to withstand any controversy or legal difficulties such work is known to create." Indeed — a survivor. One such "difficulty" involved one of those international clients, Saudi Prince Nawaf Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. As reported in the April 2000 *Vanity Fair*, Parsky, while with Gibson, Dunn, found companies and property for Middle East clients to buy, with the law firm handling the legal work involved in the acquisitions. Parsky was credited with bringing an estimated $80 million in new business to the firm. But "just months after leaving Gibson, Dunn," according to *Vanity Fair:*

> The prince accused Parsky of steering him to bad real-estate investments in which Parsky or his Gibson, Dunn colleagues and clients had hidden interests, including one in which Parsky personally had an ownership stake. Parsky denied that he profited from the sale, but, as *Forbes* reported, he also refused to produce related documents. In July of 1991, a reported $20 million settlement, involving the repurchase from him of certain properties and the reimbursement of certain loans, was reached with the prince. Three WSGP [a partnership Parsky had formed with former Treasury Secretary William Simon] partners refused at the time to participate in the payback because, they implied, Parsky was the responsible party. The settlement, they felt, was as good as an admission of guilt. Simon did participate fully in the settlement, but two months later abruptly pulled out of WSGP, causing the collapse of a $300 million deal that was soon to close. "I totally lost trust and confidence in Gerald L. Parsky and no longer wished to be associated with him either professionally or personally," Simon stated.

"'I totally lost trust and confidence in Gerald L. Parsky and no longer wished to be associated with him either professionally or personally,' [former Treasury Secretary William] Simon [Sr.] stated.'
— *Vanity Fair*

Parsky and Simon's lawyer, George Gillespie, disagree, reported *Vanity Fair*, about who handled the prince's investments, Parsky saying Simon was the prince's financial advisor, Gillespie saying the prince was Parsky's client and that Simon provided the prince no financial assistance directly "and to suggest otherwise is 'a bald-faced lie.'" According to *Vanity Fair:*

> Gillespie adds that Parsky's misdealings with the prince were "extremely serious," and that when the prince uncovered them and complained, Parsky kept the news to himself. Gillespie had come to mistrust Parsky, he says, well before the prince complained. When the problem finally came to light, it was Gillespie who urged Simon to settle, and to sever the partnership, lest Simon's reputation be marred. Parsky denies these charges and says, "William Simon and I participated in a number of investments years ago with many investors, including Prince Nawaf. All those investors were treated fairly and Bill Simon was very involved with the investments. He also borrowed approximately $6 million from Prince Nawaf to finance investments in certain U.S. thrifts. It is unfortunate that William Simon and his operatives continue to distort the truth about matters that occurred more than 15 years ago. I certainly misjudged William Simon."

Vanity Fair reported that Parsky said this episode should be put "in perspective" by recording that his "10-year career since then has involved acquiring 120 companies with revenues in excess of $3 billion, establishing two investments funds, one with $220 million of equity, and the other with $780 million of equity, and every single transaction has been positive — with average returns to our investors of 40 percent annually.'"

Last April, Parsky told Copley News Service that Bush "is committed to changing the face of the Republican Party in California and to reach out to people that felt left out." He said the national GOP will provide money for next year's election and for redistricting "once we demonstrate to the donor community that we are taking a professional approach and learning from our past." Now according to Parsky's plan, "taking a professional approach" does not mean reforming the RNC's old-boy vendor network to

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make the preparation of California-relevant TV or radio spots the top priority, nor does "reaching out to people that felt left out" mean discouraging big business from selling-out taxpayers or encouraging GOP presidential candidates to champion middle-income homeowners against big labor/big business alliances to raise their taxes. Men who commute by Gulfstream jet rather than on congested freeways cannot be expected to think about things like that. They move too fast for the messy business of building consensus among the unruly grass roots. When they say "professionalize," they mean installing a system where a largely-autonomous COO can listen to voices from above without having to contend with those from below.

As it happens, this approach is not really new. In 1990, Pete Wilson cleaned house at the CRP, installing a top staff of dependable yes-men, beholden only to the power at the top, freeing the governor to indulge his unilateral impulses, without checks and balances, straight into the 1992 GOP electoral collapse.

Along the way, the state Central Committee elected a conservative chairman — Jim Dignan — with enough backbone to fight Wilson. Dignan disrupted Pete's unilateral crusade to dissolve all connection between the state GOP power structure and California's conservative Republican base. No doubt the former governor is relieved to know that, under the Parsky plan, no future Dignan would be able to make himself so inconvenient again. CPR

Reagan Country

(Continued from page 15)

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Tancredo predicted that China will continue its aggressive economic and military policy "until the U.S. and the rest of the world draw the proverbial line in the sand and make it clear that Chinese plans for hegemony are unattainable. This will never happen as a result of a policy of appeasement." Sobering as the congressman's message was, the silver lining is that men like Tom Tancredo are willing to sound the alarm. Watch for this principled, articulate conservative to emerge as a leader in Congress.

The conference concluded Sunday with a final series of panels and workshops. *Human Events* columnist John Gizzi's "report card for President Bush" was the high point. Recalling that, in school, he was graded for "conduct," Gizzi awarded "W" an A+ for restoring dignity, civility, and respect to the White House — as he put it, "George W. Bush gets an A+ for conduct because he isn't Bill Clinton." (And thank God for that!)

Gizzi's report card was generally upbeat, giving Bush high marks for the tax cut, energy policies, defense posture, and particularly his appointments. Because, as conservative gray-beard Morton Blackwell observed long ago, "personnel *is* policy," conservatives should be cheered by Donald Rumsfeld at Defense, John Ashcroft at Justice, and Gail Norton at Interior. Gizzi also noted that conservatives should be pleased with Defense Secretary Colin Powell, who, although not a social conservative, has the "steely-eyed" realism and "commitment to clear common sense policies governing U.S. engagement overseas" that conservatives should find little to argue with.

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Next year's *third* annual Western Conservative Conference is already planned (June 21 - 23, 2002, in Los Angeles) with Lyn Nofziger, the longest-standing Reaganite of them all, confirmed as keynote speaker for the Friday evening banquet. California conservatives will have a great opportunity to give Lyn a warm welcome back to the state, as the man who was with the Gipper from the start and was hugely instrumental in Reagan's successful career.

With Senator Ray Haynes again serving as conference honorary chairman and Richard Delgaudio and John Stoos returning as conference chairman and vice-chairman, the event will return to the convenient, reasonably priced, comfortable Los Angeles Hacienda Hotel. An optional tour of the Reagan museum is once again planned for Friday morning.

See this issue's inside front cover for further information on next year's conference, including information on money saving early-bird registration. I plan to be there to shake Lyn's hand and say, once again, "thank you" and "well done, good and faithful servant." I hope to see many hundreds of my fellow conservatives there to join me. CPR

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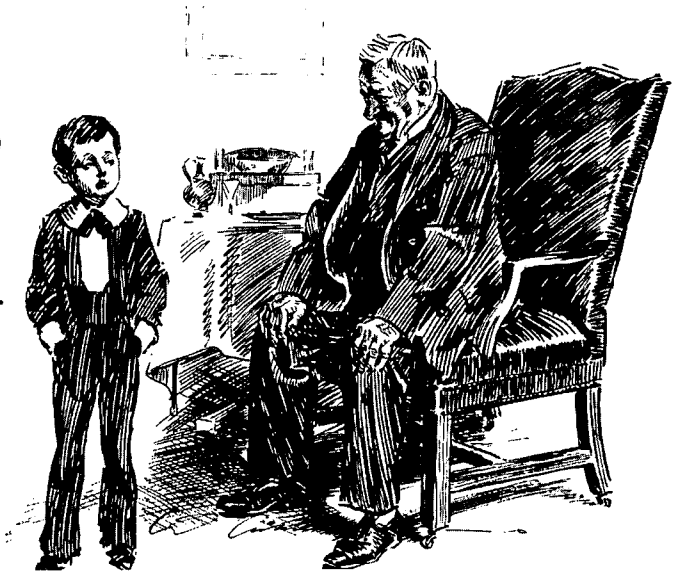
Does Character Still Count?



A bond to hold our nation together, a compass to direct her leaders — character is guardian of our freedom.

by William E. Simon, Jr.

I am honored to address the United States Military Academy at West Point — and particularly to do so here at the Simon Center, named for my father who is in so many ways the inspiration for my talk today, and who himself spoke here on a related topic ten years ago. I want to address a question that is as vital for America as it may seem redundant for West Point: *Does Character still count?*

I use the word redundant, for I know that today, as for the past 199 years, the mission of the academy is to "educate, train, and inspire each cadet to be a commissioned leader of character."

Yet there are forces today who see character as irrelevant, and their influence makes your mission harder to achieve and more difficult to maintain once you have accomplished it.

Indeed, some would say that the ripples of those forces are present in the service academies too. We all know that human nature is sometimes frail and none of us is perfect; all the more reason why character does count. But let me begin a long way from present day.

As you have learned here, there are times when history and human decisions converge at a single moment to cast the die of a nation's fortunes. So it was for Rome when Caesar crossed the Rubicon. So it was for England when Sir Francis Drake sailed out to meet the Armada. So it was for the United States when the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord.

But there are other times still when the decisive event is someone refusing to do what they could well have done but choose not to do — because of character. So it was for the American Revolution in what has sometimes been referred to as "the most important unknown moment in American history."

A Man Who Would Not Be King

The year was 1783. The place was Newburgh, New York, not far from here. The moment was toward the close of the revolutionary war. And the mood was ugly. The revolutionary cause was frustrated on many sides and Congress's failure to act decisively had set off a near-rebellion in

William E. Simon, Jr., is co-chairman of William E. Simon & Sons, a private investment firm and merchant bank. He serves on the Heritage Foundation's board. "Does Character Still Count?" is an edited transcript of a talk given to the Cadets of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, April 19, 2001.

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the army. To make matters worse, neither Washington nor his troops had been paid in six years.

Too many officers, such troubles were proof of the need for strong, central command, and there was a move afoot to give that command to Washington. One colonel had even urged Washington to assume the title "George I of the United States" — in other words, to be king. As such, he could lead the army in a rebellious coup against Congress. Barring that, they threatened to abandon their duty altogether.

Washington, of course, was emphatically opposed. It was out of the question. He recognized the soldiers' ultimatum — monarchy or mutiny — as a threat every bit as menacing as the British Army itself. He did not want America to follow the path of most revolutions, first overthrowing the existing power, then filling the resulting vacuum with an authoritarian figure who assumed absolute power — as Augustus Caesar did in Rome, Oliver Cromwell in England, Danton, and Robespierre in France, and Lenin in Russia.

To that fateful possibility Washington delivered a decisive No. He was a man who would not be king. He believed that American freedom should be ordered freedom, tempered liberty. This freedom would be characterized as much by its self-restraint in its leaders as by its removal of repression. There was a time to say Yes and a time to say No. Washington understood that it was time to say "No" to the throne of a king, and "Yes" to the authority of a republic.

How Washington did this deserves to be better known. (Far more than the story of the cherry tree, his refusal to accept the crown should be told to every American child as well as to every American leader.) This single act stunningly illustrated Washington's character as well as perhaps his greatest contribution to the country. Three times he mounted powerful arguments to dissuade his soldiers and three times he failed. His hearers were unmoved. As the historian James Flexner says, the chill in the room had not thawed. "The familiar faces looking up at him were uneasy, perplexed, sullen."

But then Washington did something that made them catch their breath. He pulled out a letter to read to them, but he was clearly unable to do so. He then fumbled for something that only his close friends had known he had — a pair of glasses. "Gentlemen," he said with a touch of sadness, "you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray but almost blind in the service of my country."

What all Washington's rhetoric had failed to do, this simple act of humanness and vulnerability achieved. The officers were in tears, the mood was broken, and the victory was won. There would be no king in America.

George Washington not only spoke about the importance of character, he demonstrated it. He won the Revolutionary War, though he is not the greatest general in our nation's history — that honor would go to one of the many great members in your "Long Gray Line." Washington gave significant speeches, though he is not the most original thinker among the founders — that honor would go to Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, or James Madison. But Washington's greatest contribution was the character he embodied — character that was as much a part of him as the blood in his veins and the marrow in his bones.

Thomas Jefferson wholeheartedly agreed with this sentiment. He would later remark of his friend Washington, "The moderation and virtue of a single character probably prevented this Revolution from being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish." England's George III, told that Washington would go back to his farm after the war was over, said: "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world." But perhaps the highest tribute is the observation of Abraham Lincoln: "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

I relate this story because the highest character is shown not only in the line of fire, but in the face of temptation. Washington demonstrated that courage many times. And the fiercest line of fire is not always traced by bullets, shells, and rockets. On that fateful day Washington was not

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on the field of battle. Some of the greatest acts of character are shown by the courage of our moral choices in a thousand quieter situations.

Yet few things are more disdained or dismissed in America today than character. Indeed, we are almost at the point where it takes character just to defend character.

The Crisis of Character

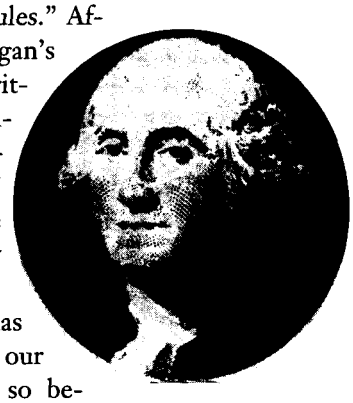
What has gone wrong? Not only West Point and our military academies but our entire Western civilization, were once emphatic about the importance of character. On this point our Hebrew, Greek, and Roman ancestors were unanimous, as were our American founders. There have been, of course, voices raised in opposition — for example, Machiavelli, in his book *The Prince*. But the mainstream of the West historically has remained rock-solid in its commitment to the fundamental importance of character, most especially in its leaders.

Washington believed American freedom would be characterized as much by its self-restraint in its leaders as by its removal of repression.

Our English word "character" comes from the Greek word "cherekter," which literally means hallmark, which refers to a distinctive or unmistakable feature — the distinguishing feature that stamps something. Character, in other words, is the inner core of who a person is that is beyond all words and deeds, and certainly beneath all images and impressions. Character is who we are when no one sees — that is, no one but God.

Why was character important in leaders? For two reasons. First, character is the bond between leaders and followers. When the character of a leader is known, he or she may be trusted and followed — even in the dark and even under fire. A follower will do almost *anything* for a leader with the character to do the *right* thing. A follower knows how a principled leader will react even in the absence of explicit directions.

Second, character provides the bearings to the leader himself, so that he or she has a compass to direct decisions — even when beyond the counsel of advisors or the constraints of law. The French philosopher Albert Camus once said, "Integrity has no need of rules." After her years in Ronald Reagan's White House, his speechwriter Peggy Noonan said simply, "In a president, character is everything." Franklin Roosevelt said the presidency "is preeminently a place of *moral* leadership."



All this, of course, has changed today. Never in our history has character been so besieged and so surrounded by a vast invasion force of ignorance, confusion, and controversy. "Character counts," its proponents say; "character has consequences." "Nonsense," reply the many critics. "In the modern world, character — if there is such a thing — is purely private. Competence and charisma are far more important." You only had to follow the Impeachment debate to see where most American citizens are — uncertain — and where many of the most powerful voices are coming from — disdainful of character.

For our American founders, character was the bedrock of leadership. John Adams declared that the people "have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, divine right to that most dreaded and enviable kind of knowledge — I mean of the character and conduct of their leaders."

How on earth do we find ourselves so far from that position? There are two main reasons: First, earlier in the twentieth century we shifted our political philosophy from "the moral republic" of the framers to what I would call "the procedural republic" of today. Character was still acknowledged as real and important. But instead of the integral link between private character and the public good, character came to be seen as a purely private matter and the public sphere was seen as the arena for competing interests that are entirely neutral.

Second, we have been influenced since the 1960s by the more radical ideas of post-

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modernism. As many of its proponents see it, character is pure fiction. There is no such thing. There is quite simply no core to any of us. We are all in the business of being impresarios to our own chosen images, which can be changed and manipulated as often as we like, for whatever purpose we like.

In a day of spin doctors, PR consultants, and plastic surgeons, any self is possible. Be whatever you want to be. What matters is "personality" and "image." You are what you wear, what you drive, or "the card that you carry." In a day of "designer personalities" any self is possible, so character is obsolete.

From the post-modern point of view, we are all "empty suits," or if you like, "empty uniforms" — only some of us are better at it than others. As Mark Twain said, "In America the secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that, you've got it made." Or as Groucho Marx said, "These are my morals — and if you don't like them ... I've got others."

A Time to Stand

How do we make a stand against these dangerous trends? And in particular how does the military make a stand when the chasm between the military and wider society is growing by the day?

You in the armed forces stress dedication, discipline, and self-sacrifice; the rest of society stresses choices, convenience, and a lack of personal responsibility, resulting all too often in self-indulgence.

Not surprisingly, the situation is fertile for double standards, hypocrisy, and injustice. In some sense, you are being held to higher standards than many other Americans, and certainly to a far higher standard than your recent Commander-in-Chief who trumpeted his White House as "the most ethical administration in history" but lacked a simple Honor Code.

The choice before you is simple and clear: As the traditional anchors of character continue to weaken in wider society, you must either loosen the traditional military standards of character and discipline, or you must find alternative ways to shape character and continue to do so regardless of the cross current of a wider society.

I would even suggest that to succeed in carrying out your mission, you have no choice but to continue making Duty, Honor, Country your foundation. That is because, in the case of the military, character is a national security issue. Even if the Oval Office betrays our nation's trust, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines never may.

So I honor you. I salute you. My life in the world of business is in some respects far easier than yours *may sometimes be.* But let me share some of the principles that I believe are relevant for all of us in shaping our views on character. You might call them seven reminders for safeguarding character in an era that is too often careless about that foundational concept.

First: Character means having a "there there." Gertrude Stein's famous remark about Oakland is a perfect comment on the post-modern view of people: "There is no *there* there."

For those of us who believe in the traditional view, character is the very core of who we are. Just as our nation's Constitution expresses our fundamental American character and makeup, so a person's character expresses most deeply what constitutes him or her as a unique individual. Character is the inner form, the essential "right stuff," that makes anything what it is — whether a period of architecture, a wine, or a soldier.

Second: Character means you are who you are when no one sees. In a day of press agents, spin-doctors, and when what is virtual is portrayed as real, our modern stress is on the external and the packaging. "The first impression may be the only impression," advertisers say. "The perception is the reality," politicians remind us.

It was not always so.

In explaining the selection of David as King, the Bible bluntly says: "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." From Plato to President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, the same theme recurs. The real test of character is not adversity but invisibility. Our character is who we are and our ethics are what we do when no one sees.

Third: Character means a long obedience in the same direction. We talk of someone acting

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"in character" or *"out of character,"* by which we mean that there is a consistency to actions that flow from our character because they come from the very core of our beings. Character is more than random acts of virtue. In Alexis de Tocqueville's famous phrase, character is the "habits of the heart" — habits that are chosen, cultivated, and practiced until they become second nature. Character is not *with us*, it is *of us*.

Fourth: Character means the courage to say No. In the 1930s Churchill often quoted Alexander the Great's remark about the Persians of his day: "The reason some nations will always be slaves is that they do not know how to say the word No." Churchill was referring to the appeasement of Hitler by the Western democracies, but his point applies far more widely.

Or as Dorothy Parker remarked of a young woman she knew: "She can speak thirteen languages, but she cannot say No in any of them."

Fifth: Character means the capacity to stand the crucible. Socrates' saying, "The unexamined life is not worth living" is the most famous but perhaps the least followed saying of the ancient world. Not surprisingly its moral equivalent is less popular — Epictetus's saying, "The life not *put to the test* is not worth living."

In other words, character is not a given like the color of our hair or our eyes. It is formed — for better or worse — in the daily experience of our lives. And once forged, character is best tested, not in times of routine or moments of success, but in crisis. As Herman Melville said, "Failure is the test of greatness."

Sixth: Character means living in truth. When Alexander Solzhenitsyn dared to be a one-man dissident movement confronting the Soviet tyranny, his choice was stark. Either he had to match their kind of power — and they had SS20s and the KGB — or he had to have a different kind of power: the moral force of truth. "One word of truth," Solzhenitzyn said in his *Nobel* speech, "outweighs the entire world." But he knew that such a notion of truth could not be just debated. It had to be acted. It had to be lived. It had to be him. His life and work were on the line. As Vaclav Havel said in the Czech revolution, "Truth prevails for those who live in truth."

And, finally, the seventh reminder of character: Character means marching to a different drummer. We have moved, it is said, from an "inner-directed" world to an "other-directed" world. Our earlier leaders — such as Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Reagan — lived as if they had swallowed gyroscopes. They had their bearings *inside* them, whereas some of our leaders today live as if they have swallowed Gallup polls. The finger pointing the right way has given way to the moistened finger held up to the wind. But this habit, of course, undermines the independence of character and debases leadership. A leader fixated on polls and focus groups is not a leader but a panderer to the people. As Harry Truman said, "I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he had taken a poll in Egypt."

Conclusion

So, let me *ask* you on the eve of your celebrating your bicentennial: What will be your personal ordeal in which, like modern knights of the Roundtable, you get to prove your character? What will be the cost you are asked to pay for standing for right?

None of us can say. It is not given to any of us to see what life will bring — whether dark, difficult, and dangerous days, or sunny times circled with prosperity and glory.

But this much I do know. There is a time to stand and fight for right when it will cost you nothing. But if you don't, the time will come when you have to stand and fight for right when it will cost you something. And if you still don't, the time will surely come when you have to stand and fight for right and it will cost you everything.

In God's name, and in the name of the Long Gray Line that stretches back behind you almost two hundred years, stand now, stand fast, and stand for ever as men and women of character, always ready to serve your country, and always dedicated to putting first "duty and honor and country." May God bless each one of you. And may God bless America. CPR

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CRITICUS

Loud Sing Cuckoo

BY G.B. TENNYSON

Sumer is icumen in,
  Lhude sing cuccu!
Groweth sed and bloweth med,
  And springth the wude nu —
Sing cuccu!

— Cuckoo Song (c. 1250)

As I WRITE, it's the summer Silly Season again, time for the annual Dog Days roundup of the cuckoo-est items that have come to Critical attention over the past year. Apologies for coining a word like cuckoo-est, but it seems appropriate here, given that the word cuckoo has come over time to denote foolishness, silliness, even in some instances lunacy. Why this should be is not entirely clear, considering that the cuckoo is one of the cleverest of birds. It does not trouble to build its own nest but simply appropriates the existing nest of another bird and lays its eggs therein for the other, obviously stupider, bird to brood and hatch. Then it goes about singing its song, which sounds in English like cuckoo, in French *coucou,* while the German-speaking bird that pops out of the clock is saying *Kuckuck.* This signals the arrival of spring and therefore that summer is a-coming in. The time- and effort-saving maneuver of egg-laying ought to be applauded by efficiency experts. Instead, it has given rise, not only to the idea of folly and madness, but to the word to describe a man whose wife has cheated on him by laying her eggs elsewhere. Such a fellow is a cuckold. Less well known, but worthy of being revived in these times of gender equality, the word for a woman whose husband has cheated on her is cuckquean. (The hapless Carolyn Condit must surely rank as the contemporary queen of cuckqueans.)

The ornithological among you will surely point out — so let me do it first — that, although the words and legends relating to the cuckoo are in widespread use throughout the world, the bird itself in its fabled form is, like the true nightingale, confined to Europe. There it has been so prominent a harbinger of spring that for many years readers of the *Times* of London would write in announcing that they had heard the first cuckoo of the season, cuckoos being migratory and coming from southern climes. Such soundings were reported so numerously and so increasingly early in the year that it became a kind of contest, some

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readers doubting the veracity of a given report, others claiming to have heard a yet earlier cuckoo cry. A famous letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury complained that his sermon on — what else? — Responsibility in Family Life was interrupted by a cuckoo. Eventually this epistolary preoccupation was used as the title of a collection of eccentric letters to the editor on all topics, *The First Cuckoo,* of which Criticus once owned a copy. Now he has to content himself with the subsequent volume, *The Second Cuckoo,* which carries on this dotty bit of business, and which, unlike the first volume, he refuses to lend to anyone.

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BY THE time that readers were reporting soundings as early as February, whereas the cuckoo normally appears in April, there seemed little reason to keep this game up, lest the cuckoo become a year-round resident, though occasional letters to the editor still report on the phenomenon. In keeping with the monotonous character of the cuckoo's call (the probable origin of the notion of silliness associated with the bird), Criticus must needs revert to some old familiar topics that just keep cuckooing year after year. But each time there is some new twist that keeps the old song going; and there are some welcome outside songs that are not at all cuckoo.

Vexing Vexilology Again

Whatever else they tell us, the continuing struggles over the Confederate battle flag demonstrate how powerful symbols can be. This year the state of Georgia quietly redesigned its official state flag, removing the Confederate battle flag which occupied the right two-thirds of the field, drastically reducing it in size, and running it in a row across the bottom along with other flags from Georgia history. That seemed to settle the issue for the state but not necessarily for each county. One county, Seminole, found its superintendent of schools banning the wearing of the flag on clothing, which some students had taken to doing, because black students found it offensive. A legal case is still in litigation, as are some thirty others across the South. Criticus notes that the state flag with its reduced Rebel symbol flies above the school, so that all those offended by its display on clothing must nevertheless sit beneath it all day. So — don't mess with Dixie. Furthermore, isn't it offensive to name counties after Indian tribes? (See "Monty" item below.)

Meanwhile, in the decaying city of St. Louis, Missouri, the appropriately named mayor, one Francis Slay, decided to remove two flags from a city hall display of state flags. The two were of course the flags of Georgia and Mississippi. There was an outcry from many in St. Louis who objected to Slay's unilaterally reducing the union to forty-eight states. Unlike the two flags, Slay remained unmoved, though he did allow that he would replace the Georgia flag when he received the new one with the reduced Rebel flag. But Mississippi would remain unrepresented. The report on all this also revealed that New York Governor George Pataki had in 1997 on his own authority removed the Georgia flag from a display at the state capitol and had it replaced by a blue banner emblazoned with the seal of the state of Georgia. Thus the Empire State not only removed the flag of the Empire State of the South but created its own flag to replace it. Doesn't Georgia have a legal case here?

On the bright side, the possibilities in this approach are endless. True to the old description that Mississippi is the South of the South, the Magnolia State retains its flag, the most unashamedly Rebel flag of all state flags, combining as it does the Southern Cross and the Stars and Bars. But note: unlike the ukase approach of Seminole County, Mayor Slay, and Governor Pataki, Mississippi actually made its determination in democratic style. It held a statewide vote. The old flag won going away. Criticus now suggests that Mississippi hold a further statewide vote, or votes, on which flags it would like to have represent other states. Designers could submit alternate flags for the other forty-nine, and the voters could democratically select which ones they liked. Imagine a New York flag depicting some of those roaming barges filled with refuse, a California flag showing illegals slinking across the border with their Mexican-issued

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condom packages, a Missouri flag depicting the Dred Scott decision and showing Dred being returned to his master, a Massachusetts flag with a car plunging over the bridge at Chappaquiddick, and a District of Columbia flag with — no, I'd better stop while ahead, if I *am* ahead.

IN THE midst of all this tearing down, there are those seeking a constitutional amendment making it a crime to burn the U.S. flag. This seems like the proverbial breaking of a butterfly upon the wheel, but if the amendment could include the provision that all state flags must remain exactly at they were in the last year of the second millennium and that any tampering with them or with any other state symbol or memorial is a death penalty offence, Criticus could give it his almost ardent support. I say "almost" because it would violate the principle of states' rights, so perhaps instead each state ought to amend its constitution on its own.

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Not Your Full Monty

Constant Readers will recall, possibly with a weary sense of *déjà vu,* the ongoing issue of school mascots that has claimed Critical attention so often in the past. Herewith a brief update. The battle at San Diego State to retain its mascot, Monty Montezuma, has effectively been lost, though, in classic academic-bureaucratic style, the resolution was put forth as a kind of Solomonic decision. Henceforth a muscular Monty will not only cease to run about the stadium lightly garbed as an Aztec warrior exhorting his team to victory, he will instead become a dignified Montezuma (no more Monty) and sit regally in the stands watching over the proceedings. Souvenir items with the appearance of the old Monty will be redesigned (making the old ones collectors' items) and the on-campus hangout Monty's Den will be renamed (how about Montezuma's Sacrifice?). All that will remain of the old mascot will be the retention of the name of the alumni-of-the-year award, the Monty. Fully clad, we trust.

Lying downwind of this smell, southwestern College in Chula Vista quickly determined to change its sports teams' names from the Apaches to the Jaguars. Upwind, however, in Burbank the school district declined to approve a request that John Burroughs High School drop its use of an Indian as its mascot. According to the report, 187 California schools still use Indian mascots, whereas nationwide about 600 institutions have dropped such mascots, including schools in the Los Angeles school district, most notably Birmingham High School in Van Nuys which was forced to drop Braves as its mascot and to substitute Patriots, to the dismay of its alumni.

Just when you thought all that might be enough for one reading, Criticus feels obliged to add yet a further fillip. A Catholic high school named after Junipero Serra about to open in San Juan Capistrano had already decided on its team name, the Crusaders, when word reached Muslims who took offense. Muslims, it seems, are still smarting over the mediaeval crusades. To be sure, the logo of the school features a shield with a kind of modified *pommé* or *fleury* cross and behind it two crossed swords, all of it admittedly rather mediaeval looking. But the crusading spirit was clearly not there. Serra authorities quickly retreated back to the drawing board and are presumably even now working on a new name and new logo. Criticus suggests they adopt Ferdinand and Isabella with a drawing showing the expulsion of the Moors from Spain.

Our Readers Write

It would be misleading to suggest that Criticus receives an Etna-like explosion and flow of mail; but it is the case that some of our readers do trouble to write to Criticus in sufficient measure that he cannot always find time to respond as fully as he should like or at all. Moreover, a number of the topics raised are worth the attention of the wider readership of *CPR* in that they were provoked by items in Criticus that were available to all. So in the spirit of sharing what I find in my nest, I pass on a few eggs, stressing that there's nothing otherwise cuckoo about them.

The ever gracious Mrs. Jackson Edwards, who has written in the past, calls my attention, as I now call yours, to the writings of one Irving Townsend. She especially recommends a work of his titled *The Less Expensive Spread* about a ranch he bought in the sixties

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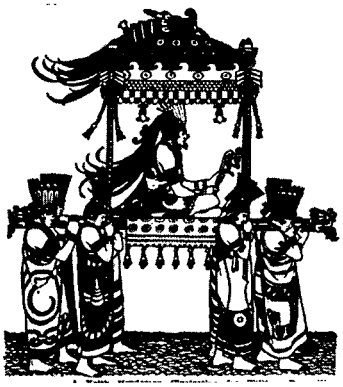
in the Santa Ynez Valley. Although I have not yet seen this work, I pass on this recommendation, as it came accompanied by words of praise for my own efforts, so we know this is from a discriminating reader. To order: Townsend Publishing, 12 Greenleaf Dr., Exeter, NH, 03833.

W.S. Penn, whose kind words about Criticus appeared in the letters section of the previous number, has been in communication on various matters. Most recently he lamented the absence of any coverage on my part of the limerick in my piece on light verse. Dr. Penn is a fan of the limerick, as am I, though we differ in our view of what constitutes the best sort of limerick. Penn is for what I would call the engagingly pleasant limerick. He even provided me with one he created, which I take the liberty of sharing with readers, using slashes for line endings to save space. "A certain young fellow of Tyne / Laid his head on the railroad line / But he died of ennui / For the 5:53 / Didn't come till a quarter past nine."



Henceforth a muscular Monty will not only cease to run about the stadium lightly garbed as an Aztec warrior, he will instead become a dignified Montezuma.

Alas, Criticus comes from a coarser limerick school, the one indeed that believes all true limericks are bawdy, to use a term that is itself almost too genteel. I explained to Dr. Penn, as I do now to readers, that I possess both of the massive volumes of limericks compiled by the mysterious G. Legman, and that from these I take my limerick models. I even added that I had actually met said Legman in Paris years ago when the first volume was available only there, it being at that time banned in the United States. I recalled that Legman was a shady-looking character in a rumpled raincoat who gave the appearance of being a flasher, which I am not sure he even had time to be, considering that his two collections of limericks run to just under 4,500 examples of the form, and they were all collected, not written, by Legman from bars and pubs and public places. Come to think of it, he could have been flashing while collecting. I forbore to quote even one to a gentleman like Dr. Penn, as I forbear now to cite one for the readership of this journal. Besides, if I tried, Editor would be at it with his blue pencil or its modern equivalent, the delete button. You shall have to frequent your own pubs and other conveniences.

Another worthy correspondent is one Thayer Smith with whom I exchange lamentations over the state of education and much else, including the curious death and rebirth of Agustin Gurza of the *L.A. Times* from boring political pundit to boring Latino music critic. Having as I do a son-in-law with the middle name of Thayer, I suspected a remote kinship there, but Thayer Smith says he cannot actually trace a Thayer surname, only given names, in his family tree. But both he and son-in-law would surely want to claim a connection with a Thayer indirectly alluded to in the previous Criticus column, namely the author of "Casey at the Bat," Ernest Lawrence Thayer, whose 1888 poem has been called the "anthem and theme song" of baseball. Thayer Smith offered the final two famous lines from memory, and close he was. They actually read: "And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout; / But there is no joy in Mudville — mighty Casey has struck out."

Finally, among recent correspondents, there is a communication in German from a gentleman named Ron Cortes, who boasts of being a UCLA graduate from 1967, "before American universities went to Hell" (*"in die Hölle gekommen"),* as he puts it. He offers his version of the nonsense poem "Der Lattenzaun" that Criticus translated in the last number. Space prevents reproducing it here, but the non-existent prize that Mr. Cortes claims as his is cheerfully given in the same spirit as the non-existent contest. But not without a reprehension. Mr. Cortes's rendering would suggest that, UCLA graduate though he may be, he was probably not an English major. His verbally accurate translation suffers from faulty scansion. This means that it often degenerates into mere prose (*e.g.* from the Cortes translation: "He took all of that space / And with it built a big place"). Both the German original and the Critical translation are in rhyming iambic tetrameter. Had Mr. Cortes come under Critical tutelage in those days when the university had substance, he would have been forced to count each stressed and unstressed syllable in the line and to feel, as in music, that it goes dih-DAH dih-DAH dih-DAH dih-DAH. Mighty Cortes has not

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struck out, but he has missed two pitches and will have to reform next time if he hopes to bring joy to poetic Mudville.

Our Writer Writes

Yes, even Criticus occasionally writes the equivalent of a letter to the editor. In this case, he wrote a letter to the Confederate Air Force in Midland, Texas, enclosing the two Criticus columns that referred to the organization. I especially wanted to call attention to my regret that the CAF will change its name as of 2002, dropping the word Confederate. I suggested that they should have restricted the vote to members from Mississippi. Of course there was no reply. CAF: RIP.

The Green Fairy

Criticus years a-gone knew a Frenchman who told him that his father, yet more years a-gone, had died from his lifelong consumption of absinthe after spending decades in a lunatic asylum, his lunacy having been caused by that same absinthe. Such stories were not uncommon from the era of absinthe drinking which extended from at least the late eighteenth century to the outbreak of World War I in 1914 when France banned production. Well, old times are here again, or almost: Absinthe is once more being produced in the very distillery where it last came off the production line. The "almost" part is that modern absinthe will have a lower alcohol level than the old original, which ran in the neighborhood of 70 percent.

For those who may not be familiar with absinthe, let it be briefly said that it is a concoction distilled primarily from an aromatic plant of the artemisia family along with grindings of the green aniseed to which is added a secret blend of medicinal herbs. The French refer to the plant as the absinthe plant but in English its common name is wormwood. Wormwood in turn takes its name from the legend that it sprang up on the trail of the serpent as it writhed its way out of Paradise. It became a byword for bitterness. The statement in Lamentations "He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood" suggests a very ancient lineage both for the bitterness and the intoxicating properties of wormwood. Absinthe is powerfully addictive, and heavy consumption can indeed lead to mental derangement. From its color and its beckoning character it was known as *la Fée Verte,* the Green Fairy.

There is much history, literature, and art connected with this drink, including artwork by Van Gogh, Manet, Picasso, and above all the 1876 Dégas painting known popularly as "The Absinthe Drinkers." It depicts a curious looking couple — the woman wearing a tall lopsided hat, the squat little bearded man with his chin in his hands, both with glazed eyes — sitting at a café table topped with glasses containing the Green Fairy. Nearly two generations later, the drink had been banned. It was succeeded by various anisette drinks, most notably Pernod, the very company that produced absinthe, and by Ricard. From her years of study in France, the late Madame Criticus favored an occasional glass of Pernod on special occasions, and it was always intriguing to see how the transparent liquid when the obligatory water was added turned the entire contents into a clouded yellow. This must have reminded those earlier absinthe drinkers of the banned substance which turned the glass into an opaline milky white when water was poured over the jigger of the emerald Green Fairy. Criticus feels compelled to note that he finds the taste of all pastis and anise-flavored drinks, not least when licorice is in the formula, altogether too bitter. Wormwood indeed.

What, you may ask in a Miss Prism mood, is the moral of this story? Well, apart from its inherent interest in the season of the cuckoo, it shows that there is often life after death, even in this life. Absinthe was banned primarily because there had been a sustained and vigorous campaign against it. Its ill effects were long known, but it also had its adherents who said they would just as soon go to Hell in their own way as to be nannyed about by do-gooders. The anti-absinthe campaign, then, was very like the modern anti-smoking campaign. The smoke fascists will probably in time prevail even more fully than they have so far. That is, they will succeed in banning tobacco entirely, down to a scorched earth policy in North Carolina and a tobacco war, like the drug war, against the inevitable black market from South America, just as there were illegal, non-French absinthes produced during the years of the ban.

BUT FORWARD look, the land is bright! Wait the three or so generations that absinthe waited, and someone will come up with a less damaging cigarette, who knows, perhaps a curative one, as absinthe was also long held to be. They are even using the old oak vats from 1900 to age modern absinthe, for the alcohol preserved the wood. Somewhere down among the loblollies in the latter part of the twenty-first century someone will come up with a descendant of the old original bright leaf that those wily future sports mascots introduced to the unsuspecting white man when first the light-hearted masters of the waves sailed into the Chesapeake. CPR

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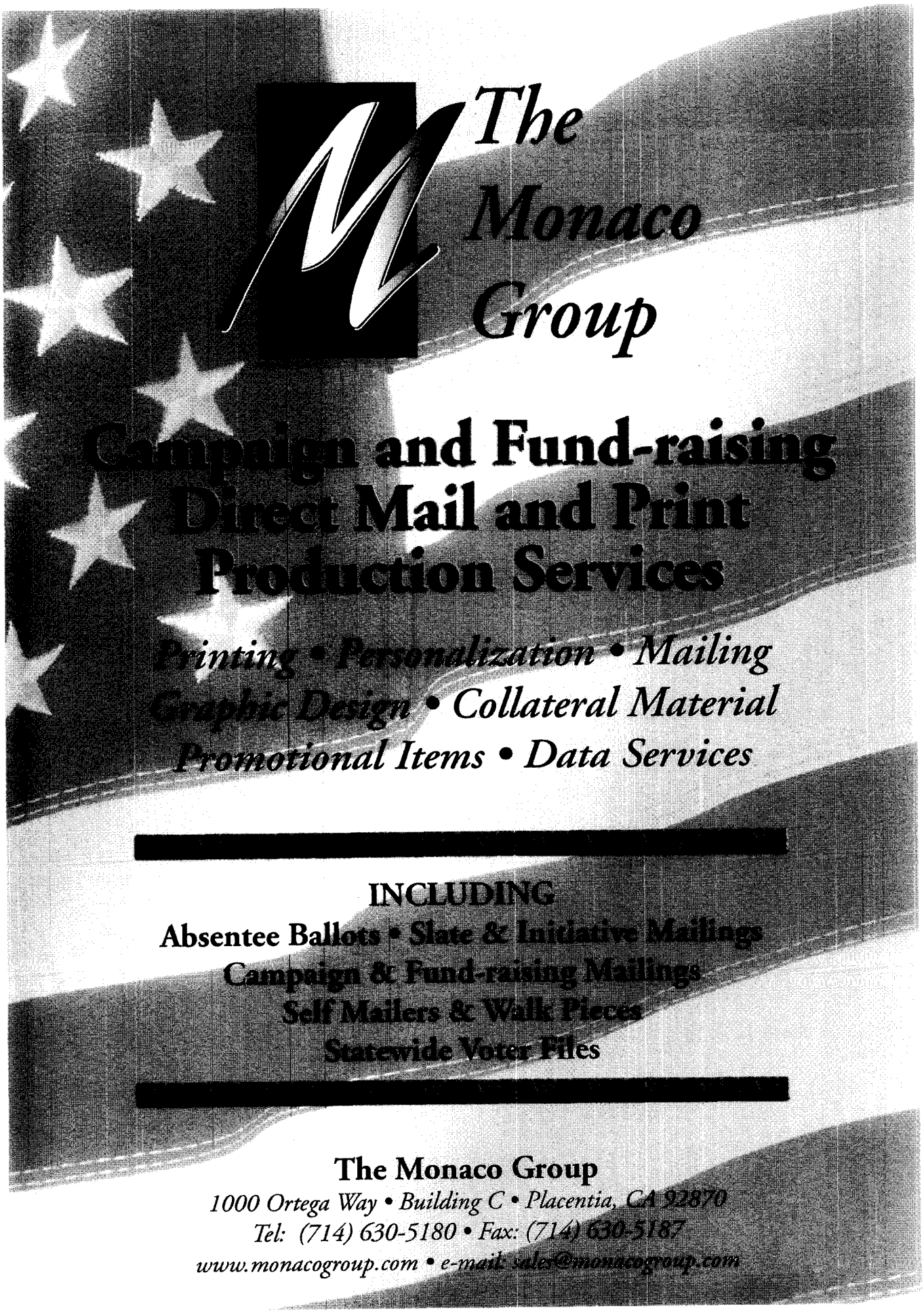
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